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FEBRUARY 1993

WIZARD™

No. 18

THE GUIDE TO COMICS

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THE GUIDE WIZARD TO COMICS

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A Letter From Our PUBLISHER

Gareb S. Shamus, millionaire. He owns a mansion and a yacht.

Cool, the first *Wizard* of 1993. To help kick off such an important event, we've once again brought together the team that made the cover to *Wizard* #9 so outragous, the mystery artist known as Wittman and our good pal, Venom. Hope you like.

Minnesota, excitement capital of the world! I went out west to visit the friendly little plant where *Wizard* is printed, and it was really cool. While I was on my little sightseeing tour, I visited the awesome Mall of the Americas (the biggest mall in the U.S.), as well as being treated to an awesome Vikings/'49ers game by the guys at the plant. Though I'm a diehard Giants fan, it was really exciting. Special tip of the Wizard's cap to Judy Scheleck for making my trip really informative and enjoyable. Thanks, Judy.

So, what's in store for you this issue? We speak to Mark Bagley & Dave Michelinie about their work on the Venom limited series, as well as chat with *Doom Patrol*'s Richard Case, Continuity's Kris Adams, *Magnus'* John Ostrander and *Elfquest*'s Richard & Wendy Pini. A lot more cool stuff on top of that, too. Take a look through.

In closing, let me just say that if you like what we've done in the past couple of years, wait until you see what we have planned for '93. Stick around.

Der Grossen Käse,

Gareb S. Shamus

WIZARD
Volume 1
Number 18
February 1993

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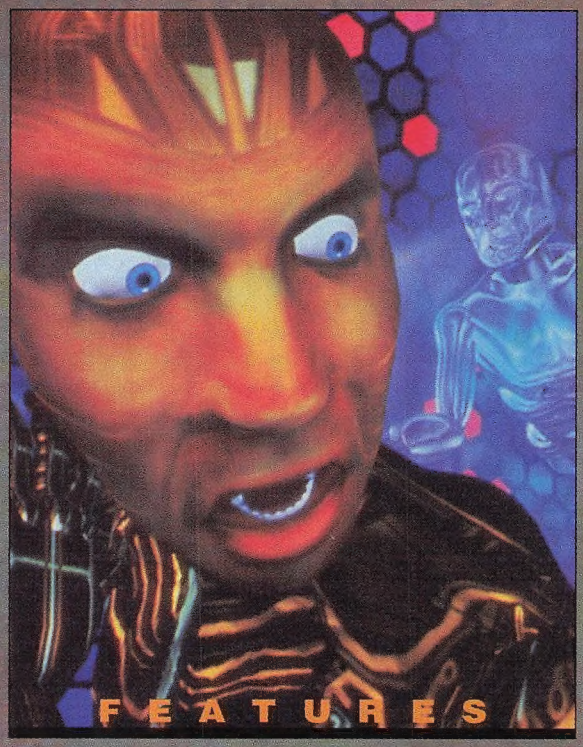
Spider-Man™ & © 1993 Marvel Entertainment Group.

COVER TWIST

Wow! Don't try that position at home, kids! For a look at what Spidey, Venom and Carnage are up to, check out the interview with Mark Bagley and David Michelinie on page 59!



The Lawnmower Man © 1992 New Line Cinema. Photo: Angel Studios.

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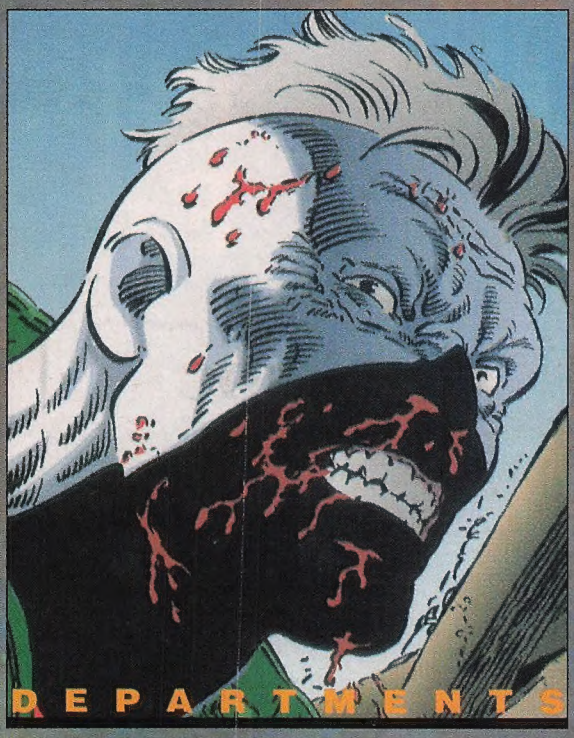

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THE ED.

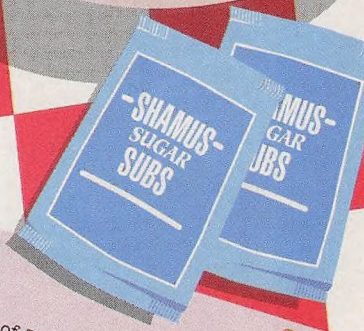
Dear Mr. O'Neill:

It was with great interest that I read your editorial, "Comic-Book Writers - a Dying Breed?", in Wizard #14. As a long time collector and reader of comics, I agree that comics are "story-telling vehicles" where the artist, to the detriment of the writer, receives greater fame. I would like to compliment the momentum by adding that the reason for more popular artists opting to write their own stories is partly due to the tacit tension that exists between writers and artists. A case in point is last year's episode at Marvel where Todd McFarlane left Marvel because he was not given the privilege of writing his own stories. Todd himself has stated that he enjoyed working with David Micheline, Marvel's comic writer, but that at times David's stories focused on repeated army scenes of heroes, all of which McFarlane had to draw. While scores of heroes juxtaposed in a given page is always visually exciting (e.g. Infinity Gauntlet or Infinity War series), it is not always necessary for the creation of amazing quality work.

The advent of the Renaissance comic artist, one who will write and draw his story, will certainly be a trend of the 1990s and promoted by publishing houses as an expedient and economical way of doing business while keeping the popular artist happy. Let us not forget that the market will ultimately decide who stays or who leaves. Many of these Renaissance comic artists are having a grand time exploring and developing their intellectual side through their writing... nothing wrong with growing. I have only seen quality work or "gems" spring forth from these new "do-it-all" comic artists and thus am curious to know who are the incompetents you refer to when you write "the results have been a spate of books with fantastic art and no story to speak of"?

In closing, will comic-book writers be a dying breed? The answer of course is no... but, they will have greater competition and they may have to take a drawing class or two.

Sincerely,
Charles Lugo
Forest Hills,NY



Dear Mr. Lugo:

Ignoring the specifics of Todd McFarlane and Image, the heart of your argument, Charles, is that 1) there is a natural tension between the artist and writer on a comic book, and 2) the one-man creative team is an expedient and economical way to do business.

I have many friends and acquaintances in the comic-book business. Most tell me rather than a "tension" in their collaborative work, there is a synergy—that the combination of diverse talents creates better work than they might come up with alone. And this attitude comes not only from writers like Peter David or artists like Mark Bagley, but from writer-artists such as John Byrne and Walt Simonson.

And of course, it is not more efficient to have a single person create a comic book...since that person can only work on one part of the job at a time. The idea of writer/penciler/inker developed because it made the production of a comic book faster, as each person could pass his work on to the next, while continuing to produce the next issue.

You ask where I see such disastrous work when you see only "quality work and 'gems'". I am tempted to answer with "to each his own," but I will only ask you, "Is a good story merely the meeting of two groups of steroid abusers who pummel each other without cause? Can a good story result when the writer messes up something as easily researched as the nature of New York's Soho district—calling it a slum when it is actually a trendy arts section? Is it good writing when a creator attempts to duplicate the complexity of the Marvel Universe—which took 30 years to develop to its present state—in the 25 pages of a single comic story?"

Finally, you note "comic-book writers...will have greater competition and they may have to take a drawing class or two." If so, is it too much to ask that the comic-book artist who wants to write take a writing class or two before demanding to create his own stories?

—Patrick Daniel O'Neill

WIZARD NEWS

THE INSIDE SCOOP ON THE WORLD OF COMICS

More Marvel UK Titles

BLACK AXE is a new book about a hero who's been fighting for 10,000 years! He has engaged in such family activities as looting, soldiering, commanding as a general, and ruling as an Emperor. Now the MyS-TECH board knows that a rival corporation has identified the gene that controls the aging process and holds the key to immortality! So they hire Black Axe to get it. In the beginning he'll encounter such well known adversaries as Death's Head II and the evil Mephisto. But with 10,000 years of fighting under his belt, Black Axe is no slouch himself! Look for cover art by John Romita Jr., and art by Edmund Perryman.

Then comes *Wild Thing*, a book about the futuristic dangers of Virtual Reality. When underground programs that cause players to lose themselves in the game or are so intense they can suffer lethal damage, the time comes for someone to put a stop to it. Nikki Doyle, alias Wild Thing, an ex-VR addict herself, is recruited by ARCADE, the organization in charge of policing and staunching the flow of illegal programs. She possesses the unique ability to enter other people's games and even interact with them to a certain extent. This opens up vast possibilities, since there are no rules within the world of Virtual Reality! (Think of it as Kid Chameleon meets Freddy Kruger.)

Lastly but not leastly(?), is *Super Soldiers*. Soldiers who fell in the Falklands war were salvaged, rebuilt and then enhanced and revived. (*Universal Soldier* ring a bell?) But soon after, the project was aborted—the Super Soldiers botched a mission in the Thai jungle and kill, well.....everybody. Childs, one of the SS, flipped out and tried to kill the rest of the unit. He and one other are deprogrammed and frozen. Ten years later, one of them wakes with no memory—just one emotion drives him on, revenge. (Are you sure this isn't *Universal Soldier*?) Hauer, the reawakened one, searches for his past and remembers his need to take his revenge out on one man, Childs! He enlists the aid of Sarah Wilde, a reporter investigating the human experimentation ten years before. (OK that does it, someone explain how come this isn't called *Universal Soldier*!) A fresh new idea from Marvel UK.

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Need more violence in your life? Check out Marvel UK's hard-hitting, take-no-prisoners heroes.

ANIA—THE ASSOCIATION OF BLACK PUBLISHERS IS BORN!

ACB Comics, Hype Comics, Up Comics, Dark Zulu Lies, Africa Rising, and Omega 7 have banded together to form ANIA, in an effort to share the burden of marketing costs and pool together talent in the hopes that this will help them reach a wider audience. The Afrocentric group will put out many books which have a positive black message. They promise no more black painted faces on white characters; instead their goal is to offer their people an alternative.

There are quite a few books to choose from: *The Original Man*, about an omnipotent black superhero who stamps out the likes of the Master Race (a supervillain) and other super nasties; *Heru, Son Of Ausar*, a book which combines ancient African religion with historical African leaders and plenty of symbolism; *Purge*, about a man and his quest to rid his city of crime and racism; *Ebony Warrior*, about a man who forgoes a Fortune 500 job to give something back to his community, but finds crime rampant so he becomes a vigilante; *Zwanna Son Of Zulu*, an ongoing story about the experiences of Prince Zwanna, an African student who was sent to the states to study and then returns to Africa to save the troubled kingdom of his brother and sister, the king and princess; and *Inner City Products*, about a rap group called Messengers that manage to rid New York City of crime through their product awareness lyrics—but International Consumer Products is out to destroy their credibility. Can they be stopped? Read *Inner City Products* to find out! And keep on the lookout for more original products from ANIA, and put your lifejacket on 'cause they're out to rock the boat.

CHARACTERS SHOWN HERE © 1993 THEIR RESPECTIVE OWNERS.

Fem-Force Update

Two new beautiful ladies have signed aboard the movie project of *Femforce*. One will play the new character Rayda, the other the "feisty She-Cat". Dori Lonn, who was featured on the back cover of *Femforce* #53, will play the aforementioned She-Cat. Julie Michaels, who has been seen in *Superboy* the TV show, *Superforce* (that lame show with the Robocop rip-off), and co-starring in *Roadhouse* (did anyone actually STAR in that movie?) will play Rayda. So get on line now so you'll be sure and get a ticket.

Zen comes to the NES!

Konami Inc. maker of games like *CastleVania* and *Contra* for the NES have announced the tentative release of two games based on the popular *Zen Intergalactic Ninja* comic, an 8-bit NES version and a Gameboy version. The games are based on the books published by Archie comics. The games feature Zen facing off against such well-known characters as Lord Contaminous, Oil Slick, Smogger, Sulfura, and Garbage man. Konami says that the NES game "pushes the limits of the 8-bit NES platform." And with such "clean cut" guys to battle, why pass it up?

Super Buster Brothers!

Capcom, the video-game geniuses that brought us *Street Fighter II* on the SNES, are at it again! They have another arcade based offering for all of us left scampering to see what they'd do to top *Street Fighter II*. *Super Buster Brothers* is an arcade game turned home game featuring two brothers whose job is to burst deadly bubbles for points. You can do this in the game's tour mode, in which you burst the bubbles all over the world in places like the Australian Outback, Mount Fuji, the Steppes of Russia, India, and more—up to 100 levels in all! There's also the Panic mode, with 40 levels of continuous non-stop action. Will *Super Buster Brothers* burst *Street Fighter*'s bubble? You decide.

Malibu News

Malibu Megaverse is soon to spawn. A whole line of interrelated color books will begin rolling off the presses in the summer of '93. The idea was conceived and created at a five-day writers' conference held in Scottsdale, AZ. Also present and interested in the project was an undisclosed toy company. Even movies TV, and videogames are possibilities! ICM, a Hollywood talent agency, has a special arrangement with Malibu to develop the Megaverse for all these media. EEMC, an Eastern European marketing corporation, will be handling things for the Eastern European market. With a whole slew of writers who already have the story bible scripted and ready to go, the hunt is now on for some artists to bring this project to life. Sounds like someone else is lookin' to take a bite out of the market pie!

Also from Malibu, a new movie is in the works! From the pages of *Stealth Force*, comes the *Stealth Force Movie*! The cancelled

© 1987 Mike Valerio.

comic, which was originally intended to be a movie as well, has apparently sprung to new life in a film producer's hands. It was created and written by television producer Mike Valerio, and drawn by Patrick Ollife. But the comic did not break any sales records in comic shops (except maybe for bad ones). Now, after numerous close-but-no-cigar deals, Planet 3 Entertainment has decided to give it the go-ahead. Planet 3 has an arrangement with G.E.L. Production/Distribution to produce and distribute *Stealth Force* worldwide. A trailer has already been made for foreign markets and has received favorable response. So it looks good, and fans of the *Stealth Force* team, John Lujack, Sonny Ling, Hannah Bashevis, and Nikolai Androvich, should keep an eye out for the trailer. The film should be out sometime in '93. And don't discount the possibilty of the comic popping up again!

New Star in the Image Universe

DC Veterans Al Gordon and Jerry Ordway are bringing their considerable talents to us and the Image universe in the form of their new super-hero collaboration—*Wildstar*! This four issue limited series focuses on our hero, Wildstar, who has been fighting a war for the last 30 years (he's 50 now). Sometime in the future, alien symbiotic creatures will be bonded with soldiers, granting them vast superhuman powers and eliminating the use of standard weaponry. Our boy Wildstar(one of those aforementioned bonded dudes), travels back in time to present-day earth to prevent this war

© 1993 Jerry Ordway & Al Gordon.

from happening. But what good is a "good-guy from the future" story without the bad guys from the future showing up? NOTHING!! Just ask James Cameron. A handful of the evil doers, equipped with their own symbiotic zoot suits, follow W.S. back and are quite determined to toast his butt before he can muck with their beloved war. Sound cool? Check out the full scoop in the pages of *Wildstar* #1, on sale now! (And for more hot info, check out *Wizard*'s in-depth interview with Gordon & Ordway in next month's issue!).

ULTRA-COOL!

That bigger than life (and most other things too) hero, Ultraman, is making his Harvey Comics debut. Ultraman is one of Japan's most famous heroes, and he has been making waves, earthquakes and quite a commotion in America too. Now he'll be put to the printed page in a beautiful offering from Harvey. The first issue will feature a magnificent, fully painted cover by Ken Steacy. And as an added bonus, the direct-market version will be polybagged with the logo and text printed on the polybag, so the cover will remain untouched and suitable for framing. Harvey has dubbed this their Virgin Cover™ so they can preserve the cover art. Also, the book will come with a mutant monster trading card. The stories, written by Dwayne McDuffie and drawn by Ernie Colon, take place in a time after that on the popular TV series. So run! (...to your favorite comic store that is.)

Ultraman™ & © 1993 Tsuburaya Productions Co., Ltd.

Joe Kubert returns!

In an unprecedented move, comic artist great Joe Kubert has returned to pencil and ink a Marvel comic: *Ghost Rider: Spirits of Vengeance.* In an apparently unscheduled move, Joe came aboard after his son Adam Kubert (the regular penciler for *Spirits*)asked him to recommend someone else to draw the comic. Marvel editor Bobbie Chase was looking for an unknown, yet when Joe said "Yes, me" she got considerably more than she bargained for. Joe is working on a two-part, 20-page backup story in the book. This marks the first time since Marvel was known as Timely Comics that Joe has penciled AND inked a comic for them. Don't miss the return of a legend!

© 1993 Marvel.

The Death of $uper-man

Superman #75, "the best selling non-premiere comic of all time" according to Roger Fletcher, Director of Marketing for Diamond Comic Distributors, is about to be released again...and again. The first will be a substantial reprinting of the newsstand edition of *Superman* #75, as well as a trade paperback collection of the entire Doomsday storyline, (*Superman: M.O.S.* #18-19, *Justice League of America* #69, *Superman* #74-75, *Adventures of Superman* #497, *Action Comics* #684), and the one page appearances of Doomsday from *Superman: M.O.S.* #17, *Superman* #73, *Adventures of Superman* #496 and *Action Comics* #683. The trade paperback totals 168 pages, and features a new cover by Jon Bogdanove & Dennis Janke. *Justice League America* #70, the prelude to "Funeral for a Friend", the sequel to the Death of Superman, will also be released in a second printing. There will be no reprint of the polybagged collectors edition of *Superman* #75.

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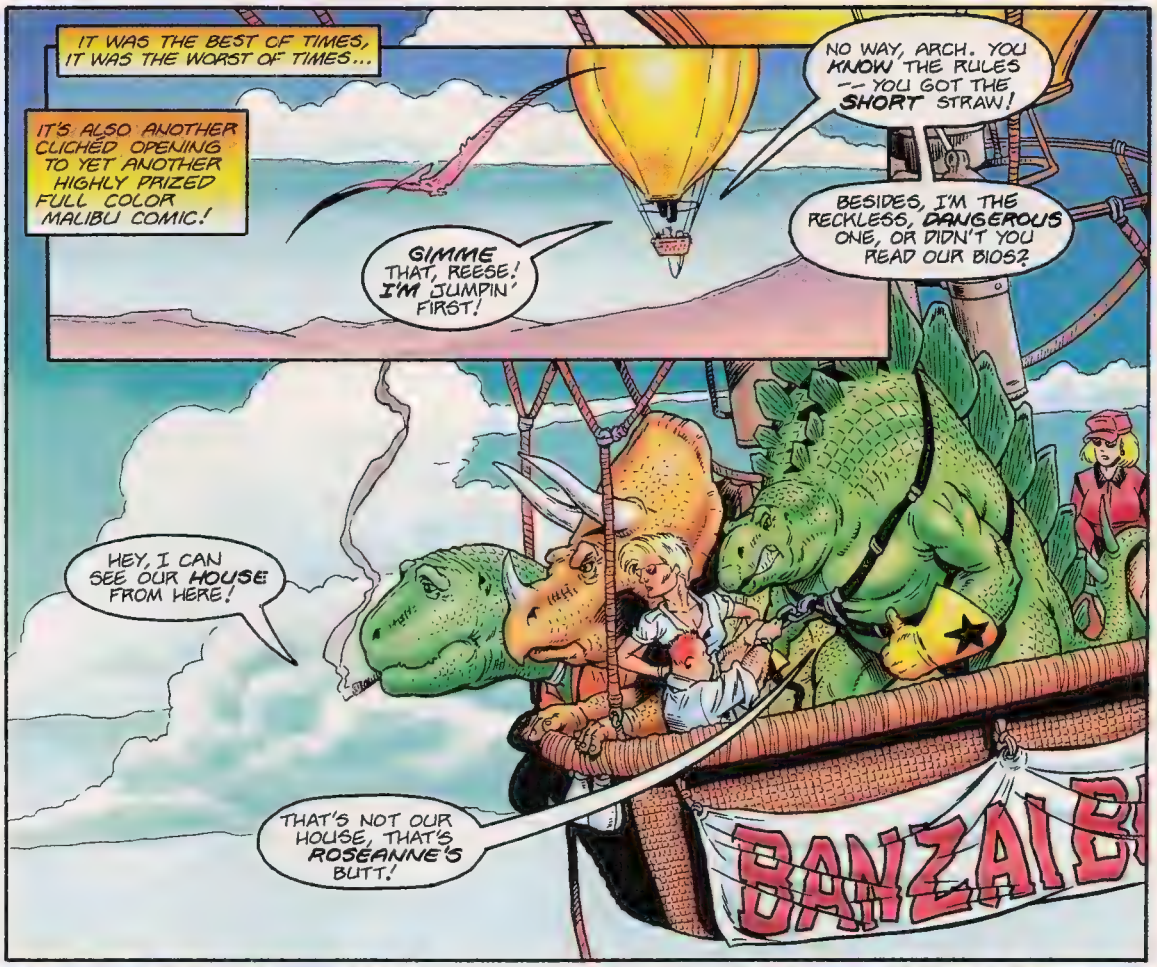
Eclipse is Loaded

National Lampoon, the makers of *Animal House* and the various Chevy Chase *Vacation* films, are about to release a new spoof, *Loaded Weapon.* This time, *Lethal Weapon* flicks are their target and they spared no expense on the star list. Starring Emilio Estevez as Jack Colt, the crazy Riggs rip-off, and Samuel Jackson as the ready-to-retire Luger, alias Murtaugh wanna-be. You know the story line, Luger wants out, Colt has a cerebral hemorrhage and together they take on Tim Curry as the naughty Jigsaw, and Captian Kirk as his partner General Mortars. Then there's the endless list of actors making cameo appearances, like Whoopi Goldberg (minus the eyebrows), Jon Lovitz, Charlie Sheen, Denis Leary, and from the old *ChiPs* show, Ponch and the other guy. As if that wasn't enough, in conjunction with the release of the movie will be the *Loaded Weapon* trading card series from Eclipse, with actual photos from the movie, for those of you who couldn't get enough of the flick while your feet were glued to the theatre's floor.

Image and Malibu split

Malibu, the publisher of Image Comics, is now the *ex*-publisher of Image Comics. The reason for the split? The word is that Image simply wanted total control of their comics, and this was the next step in taking that control. Effective immediately, Image stands alone! ☆



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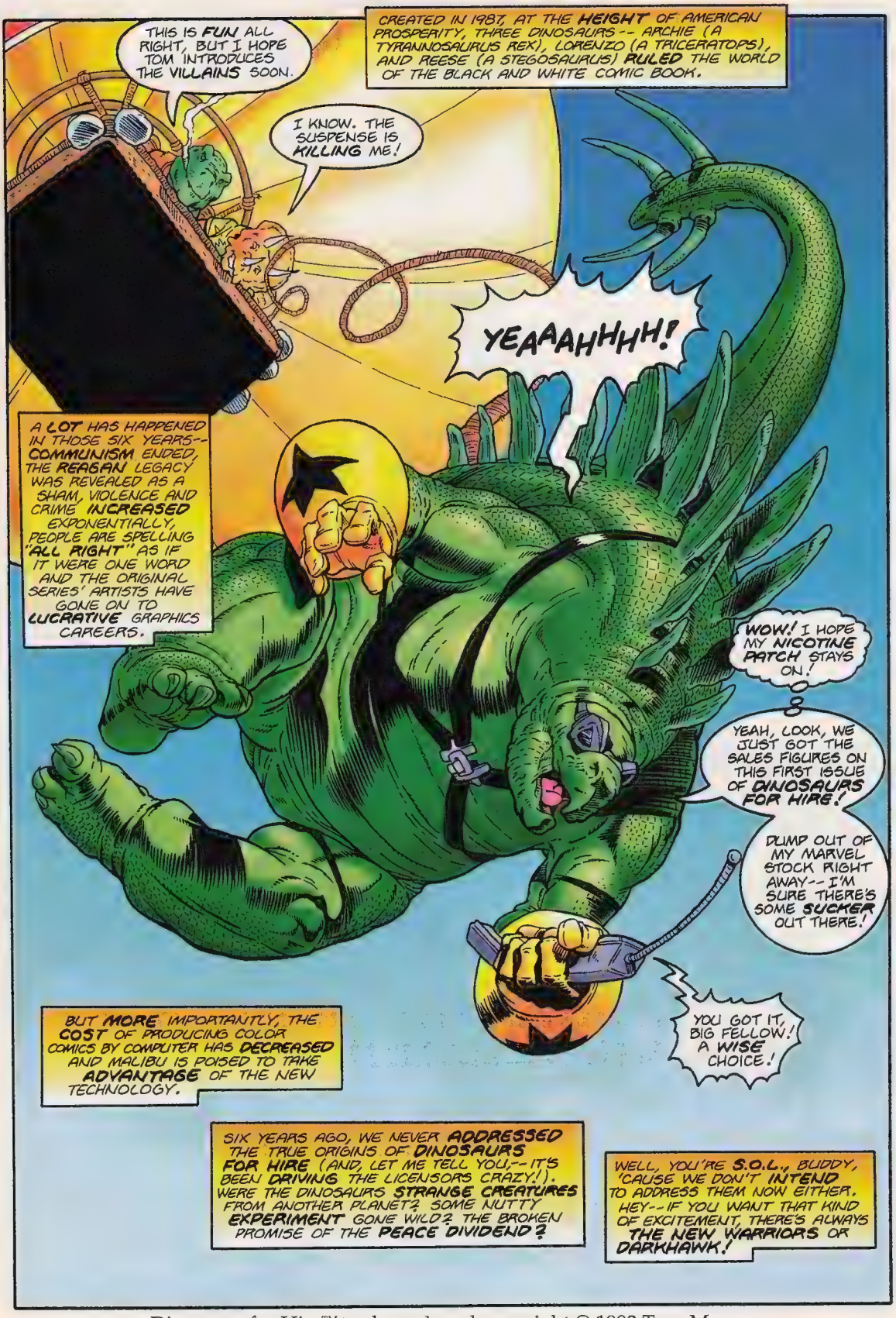

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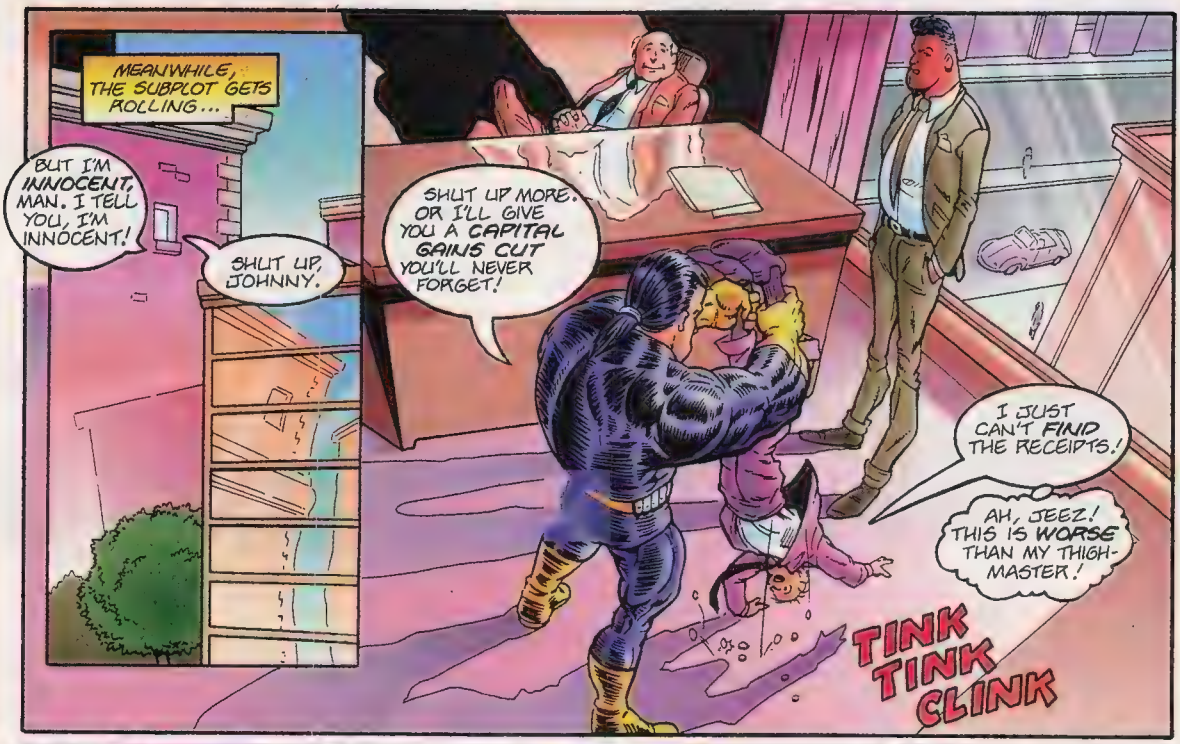

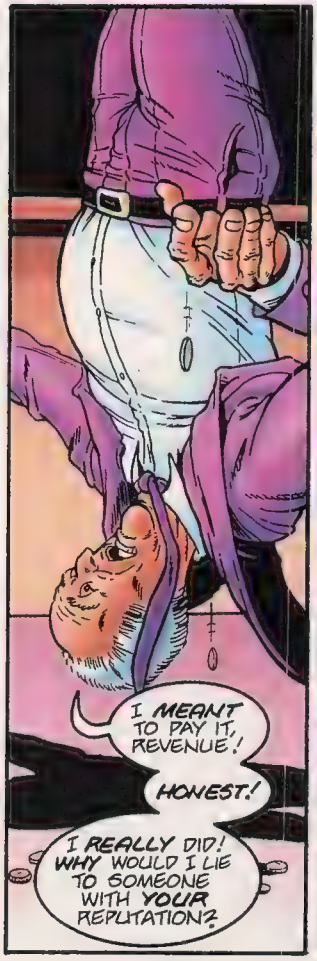

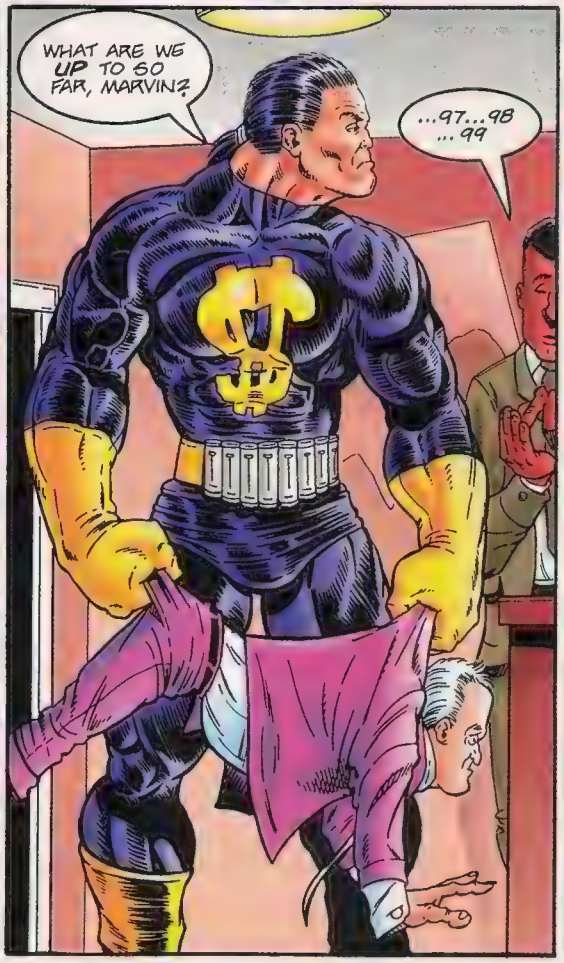

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Salutations. Welcome aboard the first issue of *Wizard* for '93. Exciting, yes? Anyway, let's talk about what's on the page opposite this one. What that "Does *Wizard* Suck?" thing is supposed to do is show us *Wizard* people what you like, don't like and outright hate. Do we use all the forms we get back? Absolutely. Whenever we run one of these things, everyone involved with this book fights over who gets to see the results first. Though it's a team-spirit type of thing that makes this magazine pretty successful, you can't help but be curious to see if the fans like your column more than, say, that weasel Brian Cunningham's (Only kidding. Put down the knife, Brian.). It gives you a nice warm feeling inside, just like hot cocoa with those little marshmallows floating in it. Mmm...marshmallows.

Aside from seeing how well you're doing and if it's time to hit Gareb up for a raise, it shows us what the problem spots are in the book. After a couple of months, when we feel that we've gotten back most of the surveys and we've tallied up all the totals, we take the numbers in hand and take a serious look at what you have to say. Between this and the comments we receive through the letters page, we decide how to make this magazine worth the four bucks you dish out for it every month. If a section gets a big thumbs down, we ditch it. Adios. If something gets a really strong "it's sorta good but...," we sit down and think about how we can make it a better section. For those that get an overwhelmingly "gosh I love it, wanna make out?" response, we increase it's size to give you more of what you like. It's simple, it works and it's kinda fun.

I know what a lot of you are thinking—that this is all a load of crap, that we do this as sort of a P.R. type thing, that we're going to throw away any entries we get or just use your names for a mailing list, ignoring your opinions.

That is totally false. As those of you who have been following this magazine for any length of time know, we listen to what you guys have to say like no other magazine in the world. Want some examples of how the fans practically tailor-made *Wizard*? Sections like The Top Ten Hottest Characters, Hunk & Babe of the Month, Grading Your Comics and Bratpack have all bit the dust. Even though some of those features were in-house favorites, we realize that we print the book for you, not for us. Other sections of the book have gotten overhauls in either how they're written, who writes them or how they look. Take a look over the past couple of issues—how many things have changed? Pretty much everything, and for the better from the responses we've gotten. So give it some serious thought and vote. And now for something completely different...

This is the last Collecting Comics in the '90s I'll be writing. In the last several months, I've taken on a great deal more responsibility and I can't devote the time necessary to C.C.'90s anymore. I came to this conclusion after writing half of this month's column, which took two days due to constant interuptions from other projects that I'm involved with. This put the column behind schedule, and caused me more than a little grief. But what about the editorial I ran in *Wizard* #15's C.C.'90s, the one about me not giving up this column? Hmm..." if I knew then what I know now..." Things change. What won't be changing anytime soon (I think) are my other writing assignments. What else do I write in this book? Mostly stuff that no one signs their name to; you know, just *Wizard* stuff—Top Ten Comics, Market Watch, Comic Watch, half of the C.B.I.Q. (with my good buddy Rob Samsel), Magic Words, and the monthly autograph contest thing. So why give up on this column and not one of those mentioned above? This column was created to help today's collectors weed through all the crap and garbage that's infesting today's marketplace, and I think it's only right that it's written by someone who can give this section 100 percent of their time, something I can't do. So what's in store for this column in the future? Since the decision to stop writing this column is about, oh, half an hour old, no replacement has been chosen (or even thought about). Because of this, there won't be a C.C.'90s column next month. Collecting Comics in the '90s will return in issue #20 with a stronger focus and a new writer. So there you have it. I just didn't want to disappear from these pages without an explanation.

Adios. ☆

PATRICK McCALLUM

Does Wizard Suck?

Y'know, we haven't run one of these fan survey doohickeys since...YIKES, issue #10!! It's not that we don't care what you think, it's just that we've been busy rearranging Wizard *to make it a better mag for you. Has it worked? We think so, but there is always room for improvement. Listed below are all the various features that you, the fans, have chosen to be the meat of* Wizard. *Next to these are three voting boxes—choose one that best describes how you feel about that section of the magazine. Do we actually look at these things, or simply chuck them in the crapper? Well, you got us. We chuck 'em in the crapper. Who cares what you think. Jerk. Relax, we're only kidding. We* do *react to what you have to say. Vote! You will make a difference. By the way, if you don't want to trash your mag by cutting out the page, Xerox it and then fill out the copy with a red or blue pen. Thanks!*

Name: _____

Age: _____ **Sex:** _____

Address: _____

_____

How many hours do you spend with Wizard each month?
☐1-4 ☐5-10 ☐11-15 ☐16-20 ☐21-25 ☐26+

How much do you spend on comics and comic-related merchandise every month?
☐$1-10 ☐11-15 ☐16-25 ☐26-50 ☐51-100 ☐100+

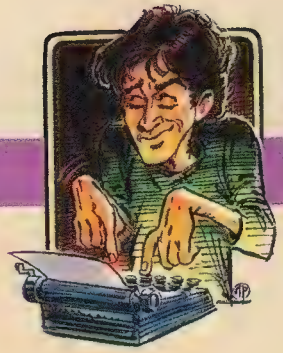
Which of these magazines do you read?

check all that apply	Never	Sometimes	Always
Advance Comics	☐	☐	☐
Beckett (any sport)	☐	☐	☐
Comics Interview	☐	☐	☐
Comics Scene	☐	☐	☐
CBG Newspaper	☐	☐	☐
CBG Price Guide	☐	☐	☐
CVM	☐	☐	☐
EGM	☐	☐	☐
Nintendo Power	☐	☐	☐
Overstreet Update	☐	☐	☐
People	☐	☐	☐
Starlog	☐	☐	☐
Sports Illustrated	☐	☐	☐
Other_____			

	Love it! Don't change a thing.	Neat, but needs work.	What is this crap?
16-Bit Power	☐	☐	☐
Amazing Art	☐	☐	☐
At The Controls	☐	☐	☐
Brutes & Babes	☐	☐	☐
C.B.I.Q.	☐	☐	☐
Collecting/in the 90s	☐	☐	☐
Comic Watch	☐	☐	☐
Contest	☐	☐	☐
Crystal Ball	☐	☐	☐
Hollywood Heroes	☐	☐	☐
Magic Words	☐	☐	☐
Market Watch	☐	☐	☐
My Kind of Hero	☐	☐	☐
Number Ones	☐	☐	☐
Palmer's Picks	☐	☐	☐
Picks/Wizard's Hat	☐	☐	☐
Poster	☐	☐	☐
Price Guides:			
Comic Books	☐	☐	☐
Toys	☐	☐	☐
Trading Cards	☐	☐	☐
Top 100 Comics	☐	☐	☐
Top Ten Comics	☐	☐	☐
Toying Around	☐	☐	☐
Wizard News	☐	☐	☐
Wizard of Cards	☐	☐	☐
Wizard's Realm	☐	☐	☐
Writing At The Edge	☐	☐	☐

So now what do you do with this thing? Simple. Drop it in an envelope addressed to ***Wizard Questionnaire, 100 Red Schoolhouse Rd., Bldg B-1, Chestnut Ridge, NY 10977****, lick and slap a stamp on it then mail it off. What do you get for all your hard work? A better magazine, plain and simple. If you have any additional comments, please feel free to attach them to this form. We do want to hear from you. Thanks for your time.*

PALMER'S PICKS



Excluding the Image group, comic book creators who leave the big two (Marvel and DC) usually do so to pursue work that strays from the mainstream. Artists and writers who have done so in the past include Alan Moore, Frank Miller, and Bill Sienkiewicz. One creator who goes against this example is Ted McKeever, who did the reverse. He produced *Transit* and *Eddy Current* for two different independent companies, and then went to Marvel's Epic line to create *Plastic Forks* and *Metropol.*

McKeever's first series, *Transit*, went virtually unnoticed when it appeared in 1986. The comic, with its stark black and white artwork and urban murder-mystery theme, was lost among the slew of poor quality black and whites. On the other hand, McKeever's other project at the time, *Eddy Current,* was able to ride out the glut and survive.

Eddy Current was a unique comic. Billed as a "twelve hour series," each issue detailed the events of one hour in the life of Eddy Current, a lunatic who was destined to save the world. McKeever's black and white artwork rapidly progressed over the course of the story. Originally heavily influenced by the art of Central American comic artist Jose Munoz, McKeever's art began to take on a life of its own, becoming more expressionistic, yet with a hint of realism. He also experimented with different inking techniques, including cross-hatching and splattering and stippling.

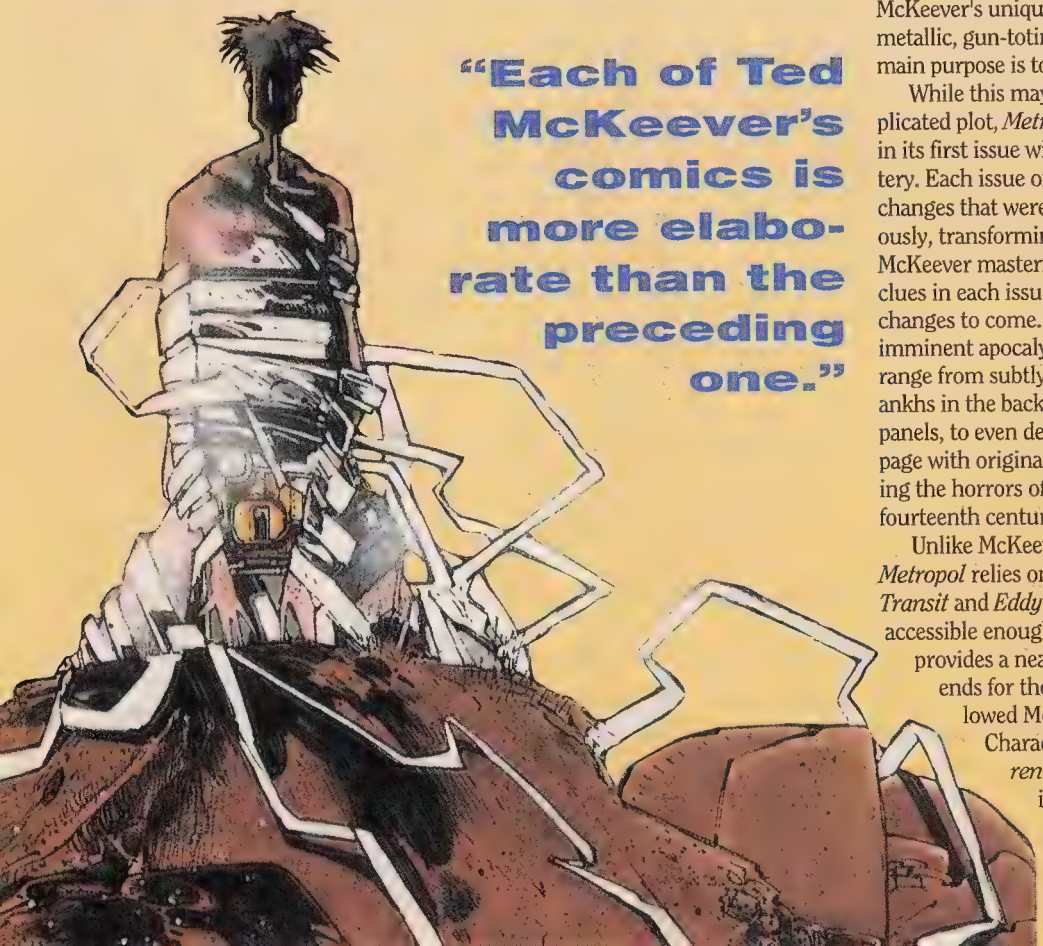
McKeever's next series was *Plastic Forks.* It was originally announced as a twelve issue full-color series from Comico, but was met with a series of delays. The comic finally resurfaced in 1990 as a prestige format series from Marvel's Epic line. Aside from benefiting from increased exposure and distribution by working with one of the major companies, McKeever was able to showcase his expertise with full color artwork. The painted art of *Plastic Forks* allowed him to experiment with the use of color for emotional effect and to attempt to show how light affects the eye and blurs the way objects are perceived.

McKeever remained at Epic for his next, and most current, series, *Metropol.* The comic ties together all of McKeever's previous comics into one story that revolves around the end of the world. An unnamed city is beset by a plague that rivals the infamous Black Death of the fourteenth century, which leads to the appearance of demons around the city. The only people left to save mankind are five people who die to be reborn as Angels Who Watch. These angels are not your typical winged cherubs in white robes. Under McKeever's unique pen, they become metallic, gun-toting warriors whose main purpose is to rid the earth of evil.

While this may sound like a complicated plot, *Metropol* starts off simply in its first issue with a murder mystery. Each issue of the series heralds changes that were hinted at previously, transforming the initial story. McKeever masterfully drops subtle clues in each issue, foreshadowing the changes to come. His hints of the imminent apocalypse in *Metropol* range from subtly placing crosses and ankhs in the backgrounds of certain panels, to even decorating the letters page with original woodcuts recounting the horrors of the plague from the fourteenth century.

Unlike McKeever's previous books, *Metropol* relies on his previous works, *Transit* and *Eddy Current. Metropol* is accessible enough for new readers, yet provides a neat tying-up of loose ends for those who have followed McKeever's work. Characters from *Eddy Current* play important roles in *Metropol,* like Nun, who is one of the

"Each of Ted McKeever's comics is more elaborate than the preceding one."



ARTWORK FROM PLASTIC FORKS #1
™ & © 1990 TED MCKEEVER.

five angels, and even Eddy himself, who is resurrected to help the angels. Some of the characters from *Transit* figure more prominently in *Metropol,* such as Spud, who is revealed to be Enoch, the main character of *Metropol,* and Sam the Meatman and Nigel, two supporting characters. As of yet, McKeever has yet to incorporate themes and characters from *Plastic Forks,* but there have been hints that he might in future volumes.

In this short article, I have only scratched the surface of the complexity of McKeever's work. Each of his comics is more elaborate than the preceding one, with *Metropol* being the most intricate. *Metropol* can be examined on many levels, each as fascinating and rewarding as the other. One can trace McKeever's use of symbols, foreshadowing, and biblical allusions, or just enjoy the book for its well-crafted plot. I'm sure if you pick up a copy, you'll be able to find something to interest you on any level.

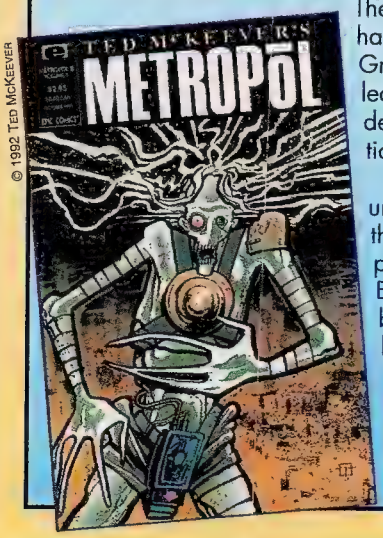
Before I go, I'd like to take a little bit of this month's article to thank everyone who wrote in response to issue #14's shameless begging for fan mail. I did everything except get on my hands and knees, and to my pleasant surprise it worked. But by all means, keep writing! I still need suggestions for future articles, as well as feedback on what I've written so far. Traveling between home and college in Virginia, I can't list a permanent address, so write to me here at *Wizard.* I may regret saying this, but if you send an intelligent, well thought-out letter, I'll do my best to write back a semi-intelligent reply. I'm not promising a great work of modern literature, just a short note to let you know that I read your letter. And I promise that I won't resort to sending out form replies (at least not yet). Write to: Palmer's Picks, c/o Wizard Press, 100 Red Schoolhouse Rd., Bldg. B-1, Chestnut Ridge NY 10977. ☆

Recommended Reading

Transit - Five issues of McKeever's first series were published by Vortex in 1986. McKeever was virtually an unknown, so the comics may be a little hard to find. There are no firm plans yet, but Dark Horse plans to collect the entire series.

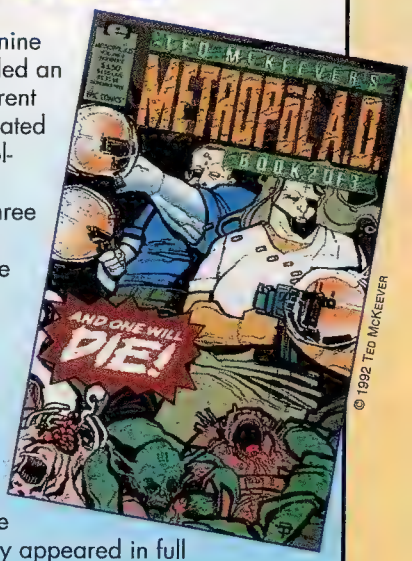
Eddy Current - The original twelve issue run of this series was published in black and white by Mad Dog. Dark Horse collected the entire series in 1991 in one 360-page hard cover volume, including all of the hard-to-find issues under a new cover. Unfortunately, the book is out of print, and there are no plans for a second printing. Good luck finding a copy.

Plastic Forks - Epic originally published this series in five 64-page, full color comics in 1990. The original issues are hard to find, but Graphitti Designs collected all five in one deluxe hardcover edition.



© 1992 Ted McKeever

Metropol - Volumes one and two of this series have been published in color by Epic, and there may be trade paperbacks of the comics in the future, but there is no definite word yet. Volume one ran twelve issues, and numbers nine through eleven included an eight page Eddy Current back-up feature illustrated by Mike Mignola. Volume two, subtitled Metropol A.D., ran three issues. More volumes are planned, but none have been scheduled yet.



© 1992 Ted McKeever

Other works - McKeever has also illustrated several shorter works for a variety of publishers. Some highlights include: "Dance of the Fetus" - This short story appeared in full painted color in *Hellraiser* #1 from Epic. McKeever also drew the end pages in issue #3 and the cover for issue #5. *Grim Jack* #47 - This issue contained a short Eddy Current story that takes place as part of the "Eddy Current" story. It was published in full color by First comics. "Survivor" - Dave Gibbons wrote and McKeever illustrated this revisionist Superman story for the first issue of the original black and white run of *A1*. McKeever and Gibbons switched roles and collaborated on another story for the same issue of *A1* titled "Libretto". McKeever also wrote and drew "The Talk of Creatures" for issue #2 of *A1*.

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MARVEL COMICS

WRITING AT THE EDGE

PHOTO: AL ORTEGA

By David Quinn

This month, I interrupt my ongoing commentary, "Collaborating at the Edge," to offer news a little more timely. Nothing's more timely 'round New Year's than the East Coast's biggest comic convention—January's Great Eastern New York show! But first, grateful—and slightly overwhelmed—thanks to you readers who mentioned my monthly column's debut back in *Wizard* #15.

You usually begin, "I saw you in *Wizard*," and if you're familiar with my work, invariably continue with something like, "You didn't look as sick/twisted/one-eye-in-the-middle-of-your-forehead as I imagined you would." Sorry if I disappointed you, really. Does the name *Dorian Gray* strike a cord? (Read your Oscar Wilde—you'll be glad you did.)

Seriously, though, at October's Motor City Con, autographing my fuzzy little face in this mag, it was a bit daunting to meet readers a whole lot, well, younger than my conception of a "target audience."

I'm accustomed to the hard-core rebel *Faust* fan, even used to the kind of I'm-into-unpopular-comics-and-proud-of-it types who might look forward to *Fast Forward* or *This Year's Girl* from Piranha. But now I'm meeting comic fans who are like...real comic fans! I guess what I'm trying to say is, "Nice to meet you...does your mother know you're hanging out with me?"

The down side? Probably more of you read these conversational mini-essays than all my fiction...so far. And fiction's the stuff that comes easy; this is kind of new. So, consider W.A.T.E. a public service...or my Fiendish Plan to convince you, you know, real comics fans there's more challenging entertainment to be found in our art form than what first meets the eye—when we're ready for it! I'll be waiting here at the coffee counter. Let me know what you always wanted to hear from comics creators, but thought they wouldn't tell ya!

So, uh, what will you be doing January 22-24?

My Rebel Studios partner, Tim Vigil, and I—plus a couple hundred other pros and a couple thousand other fans—will hit the first Great Eastern show at their new huge venue, the Jacob Javits Center. Last year, I delivered the first chapters of *Faust: The Singha's Talons* to Tim, right here. It's funny, as partners, we talk almost daily, but it takes a convention to get us in the same room!

This time around, we'll be reviewing work so far, and catching up with each other's process on *Faust*. And a show's the best place to meet new cohorts. Some of the artists and writers who came up to us at this convention last year now share pages with "Joanna" in the latest *Raw Media Mags*!

Some of you remember last year's location—a much smaller, much more disorganized, hotel ballroom—was so dangerously overcrowded, the fire marshal closed the doors! You guessed it. Jim Lee. And that was just for starters. Now we have a bigger place to fill—there'll be even more guests, from the "hottest" new kids to the "golden age," and every kind of creator in between. Maybe you'd be into seeing free-for-all creator conversations? Check out the panels. Last year's dramatically-phrased thematic question "Where have all the monsters gone?" had, among others, Neil Gaiman, Steve Bissette, Phil Nutman, and I laughing, "Who wants to know?" But what might have been your "horror mosh" turned out to be quite a show...why? The audience, packed with thinking readers ready to engage with the question, proved themselves the real attraction. I'll never forget the woman who explained how she was repulsed by the graphic sexual violence of *Faust*, but understood its place in the story, and the young man who said, "Thanks for giving us credit for having at least *half* a brain."

Who says creators only collaborate among ourselves? Every time I make contact with a reader who's involved with the characters, it sends me back to the desk recharged. Readers do the real work to making those still picture move and those word balloons speak. You say you're into comics, but conventions are something you haven't checked out yet? What are you waiting for? Hopefully, in exchange for the time you've given me reading, you've sampled a taste of the frenzy and opportunity of a big convention. Make it out to the Jacob Javits Convention Center, say hello. ☆

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2. You may submit as many entries as you like, however, each entry must be mailed separately. Sponsors disclaim all liability, and are not responsible, for lost, mutilated, late or misdirected entries, or for typographical errors on the official contest entry forms or the official rules and conditions of this contest. Entries must be postmarked no later than April 30, 1993. Entries will not be returned. This contest runs from October 1, 1992 through April 30, 1993. All entries are the sole and exclusive property of Sun Corporation of America

3. GRAND PRIZE. One (1) grand prize will be awarded. The grand prize winner will have his or her name and likeness used as a character which will appear in one future edition of a DC Comics Inc. comic book. The grand prize has a retail value of less than $50.00 as valued by the Sponsors. No other prizes will be awarded. All entrants hereby agree that if they are selected to receive the grand prize they consent to, and by acceptance of the grand prize the participant selected agrees to sign a waiver and release in which he or she consents in writing to the right of Sun Corporation of America, DC Comics Inc. and their respective affiliates and agents to use his or her name and likeness for advertising and publicity purposes and as a character in one DC Comics Inc. comic book without additional compensation of any kind whatsoever. Failure to sign the waiver and release will result in forfeiture of the grand prize. Unless the participant selected forfeits the grand prize, whether intentionally or unintentionally the grand prize will be awarded.

4. PRIZE DRAWING. The random drawing to select the grand prize winner will be conducted by Sponsors on or after May 10, 1993. The grand prize winner will be notified by mail by May 31, 1993. Odds of winning will be determined based upon the total number of entries received by Sponsors.

5. The grand prize is not transferable, assignable or redeemable for cash. Sponsors reserve the right to substitute the grand prize with a prize or prizes of comparable value. The grand prize winner and/or parent or legal guardian is solely responsible for any and all applicable federal, state and local taxes.

6. ELIGIBILITY. This contest is open to residents of the United States, except where prohibited by law, and with the exception of employees and families of employees of Sun Corporation of America, DC Comics Inc., Warner Bros., Warner Bros. Consumer Products, Sun Electronics Corporation and any and all advertising agencies and publishers involved in any way with marketing and publicizing of this contest.

7. For the name of the grand prize winner, send a stamped self addressed envelope to Sun Corporation of America 11165 Knott Avenue, Cypress, CA 90630, Attn: Sweepstakes Contest Winner. Residents of Washington and Vermont need not enclose a stamped envelope.

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AT THE Controls

Glenn Rubenstein

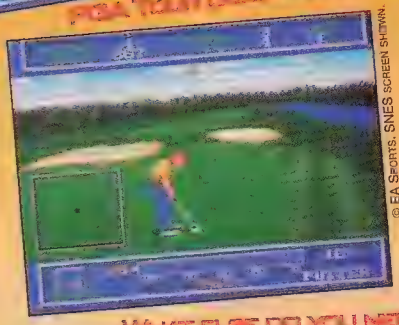
Happy New Year! Here we are again with another edition of At the Controls. It's January and it's sports time, with the Super Bowl coming up, and baseball season right around the corner. Sports is a big medium, whether it's playing them on the field, watching them on television or playing them on your Super Nintendo or Sega Genesis. Where networks such as ESPN have a dominant position on the television side of sports, Electronic Arts has accomplished the same with Electronic Arts Sports (EA Sports).

What is EA Sports exactly? Well it all started back in 1990 when Electronic Arts began releasing games for the Sega Genesis. That Christmas they released *John Madden Football* and *Lakers Vs. Celtics*, and both sold incredibly and were a huge hit with videogame fans. Over the course of 1991 they also released *PGA Tour Golf*; then in the end of 1991 they did something revolutionary.

Deciding to go straight ahead into becoming the premier sports video game line, Electronic Arts established EA Sports, complete with making it a whole division of their company. They then continued that year by releasing an update to *John Madden Football (John Madden '92)* and a hockey game, *NHL Hockey*. Both sold incredibly

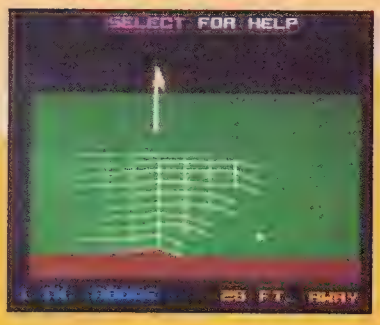
© EA Sports. SNES screen shown.

PGA TOUR GOLF AND A SNES



© EA Sports. SNES screen shown.

WHAT ELSE DO YOU NEED?



© EA Sports. SNES screen shown.

GAME REVIEWS

Air Zonk

(Turbo Tech for the Turbo Duo)

Bonk's descendent Zonk flies onto the Turbo Duo for new levels of gameplay. The game is a shooter, unlike the previous adventure games Bonk has appeared in, but the fun is still here. Lots of great enemies and bosses, as well as cool allies who help you in your quest, Turbo fans can rejoice for there is finally a good shoot 'em up on the Duo.

Overall: A

Loom

(Turbo Tech for Turbo Duo)

One of the best quest games ever on the PC comes to the Turbo Duo. As the Spellweaver Bobbin you explore many lands in search of your colony. To overcome obstacles you must employ your magical staff, and its magical spells. The music in the game is amazing, even if the challenge is a bit on the easy side.

Overall: A

Gods

(Software Toolworks for Genesis)

This game was originally done on the PC by Bitmap Brothers from England, and it has been perfectly translated to the Sega Genesis. The challenge is intense, the graphics are above average, but what sets the game apart is the pure action battle in the quest for immortality. Plenty of levels, lots of fun. Not too sophisticated, but good enough.

Overall: B

Super Star Wars

(LucasArts for Super NES)

Star Wars games for the SNES intense opening sequence straight from the movie, followed by some of the best action ever on the SNES. 14 levels overall, including two great 3-D scenarios featuring the Landspeeder and X-Wing. A perfect game for fans of the trilogy and avid gameplayers.

Overall: A+

Felix the Cat

(Hudson Soft for the NES)

Felix the Cat turns 70 this year and he has never looked better. Sure, the game would've been a blast on the SNES, but it holds up well here. The graphics are cute, the gameplay is fast paced and extremely clever, employing a non-violent tone. Good for kids, but worth a look from all players.

Overall: B

well and drew a large share of the videogame market for the Christmas season. Also that Christmas they released their first ever Super NES game, a version of *John Madden Football*.

In 1992, they continued releasing great games for both formats, such as *PGA Tour Golf* for the SNES, and *Lakers Vs. Bulls* for the Sega Genesis. One thing then became apparent about all EA Sports games: they were truly top notch. They improved upon the old concepts of sports games, as well as adding deluxe features such as real plays, real teams and real players. This added depth of realism mixed with great interactivity started to give these games the top slot in sports games on the videogame market. Currently there is a new batch of EA Sports games out, and all are sure to please not only sports fans but game players of all types.

John Madden Football '93

(For the Super Nintendo & Sega Genesis, $54.95)

John Madden is back with new plays, improved graphics, and a great challenge for the New Year. All this game does is add to the original elements that made the first two John Madden games such a hit. Real plays are here, as well as all the teams, including some of the greatest players ever in All-Madden Teams. This game is a must for football fans, players, or even the armchair quarterback looking to throw the winning pass and win the Super Bowl.

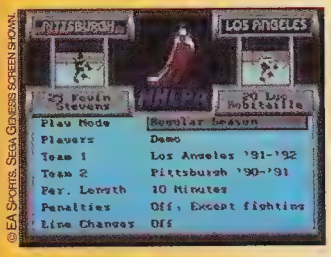
Overall: A

NHLPA Hockey

(For the Super Nintendo & Sega Genesis, $49.95)

I once made a comment about this game at June's Consumer Electronics Show where I played it for the first time, that the eyes on the players looked too big. That's about the only flaw with this game. This time around, it employs real NHL hockey players in the same great action and speed that made the first game an instant classic. If anything, I would call this the best sports game ever, deserving the attention of all videogame players.

Overall: A+



©EA Sports, Sega Genesis screen shown.

IS NHLPA HOCKEY

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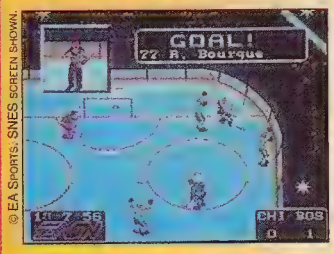
THE BEST SPORTS GAME EVER?



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NEWS

New Nintendo SFX Chip

Recently, Nintendo announced their new SFX chip, a special chip which is a part of the Super Nintendo cartridge, which allows many new graphic enhancements in Super NES games. These enhancements include richer 3-dimensional graphics, as well as more colors and better resolution overall. One of the first games to use the SFX chip is rumored to be Super Mario World 2. Super Nintendo version is also planned.

Superman Lives on Video Systems

Sunsoft, a leading Nintendo licensee recently announced that they will be releasing a 16-bit Superman game for the Sega Genesis. The plot of the game is undetermined, but the game will be on store shelves by the time you read this. A seen before. Also PC users need not feel left out. Media Vision has a Fusion CD package for $399, that will turn your PC into a superb multimedia machine.

CD-ROM Update

With Turbo Tech and Sega recently releasing CD-ROM attachments for the 16-bit systems, many people are wondering what Nintendo will be doing. Rumor has it their CD-ROM drive will be 32-bit, and unlike anything ever

© EA Sports. Sega Genesis screen shown.

JOHN MADDEN FOOTBALL '93...

© EA Sports. Sega Genesis screen shown.

IT'S A MUST FOR FOOTBALL FANS!

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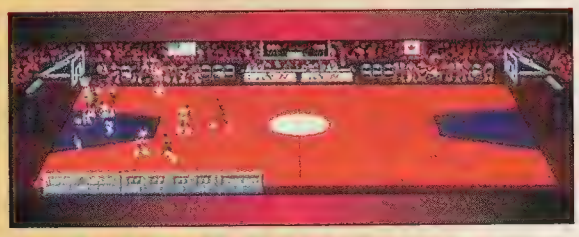

© EA Sports. Sega Genesis screen shown.

Team USA Basketball

(For the Sega Genesis, $54.95)

Sure the Olympics are just a memory now, but you can relive all the great basketball action with this terrific cartridge, featuring all the Olympic teams from all the countries, including the USA's "Dream Team." Great slam-dunk moves are included, as are all the real players and action which made this one of the most-watched events in Olympic history. Sure, after awhile the game does get a bit tedious, but it is sure to be a collector's item, and should hold basketball fans over until *Bulls Vs. Blazers* comes out sometime in the near future.

Overall: B+

That is just a small taste of the greatness EA Sports has achieved in making videogames. From all aspects their games are instant classics, and it should be amazing to see what they will do with other sports genres in the future. Until next time, keep gaming!

— Have a question or comment regarding video games? Write to: At The Controls, c/o Wizard Press, 100 Red Schoolhouse Road, Building B1, Chestnut Ridge, NY 10977

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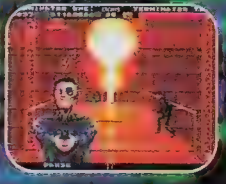

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16 BIT POWER

BY CRAIG CORNELL

Greetings, onlookers. Welcome to the realm of Dungeons & Dragons. This month I dedicate this whole column to *Warriors of the Eternal Sun*, the first official *TSR Dungeons & Dragons* Genesis game. In this offering you get to handpick a team of four unique player characters—fighter, a magic-user, thief, cleric, elf, dwarf or halfling. When you've got your team set, it's up to you to lead them into adventure.

You start off in a strange land after the castle you were defending, home of your friend the Duke, was just about to fall to the goblin hordes. Instead of being destroyed, it was transported into a mysterious valley in an even more mysterious land, a land with blazing red skies and upward horizons, where in the center burns an eternal sun. Your mission: bring back allies to the Duke's cause and solve the mysteries of the valley. Your tools consist of magic, muscle and cunning. Assemble the best mix of characters you can and defeat all who oppose you and lead your fellows to victory. The fate of your people depends on it!

A neat little story, yes? While reading the instructions and the box I became incredibly eager to play this game. So, I familiarized myself as best I could and set about it.

The first wall I ran into was the character selection. You must pick class, male or female, an identifying color (so you can tell who's who on the screen), and of course a name. But the way the button functions are set up, and the over-abundance of things I must decide on, this soon became a tedious process. Though I liked the sum of having so much control over what kind of characters I could take, the process was annoying. After I created my band of adventurers I set out to conquer me a land. First you start off in the castle—there are shops with nothing much in them (more items appear in the shops as you advance levels) and some guard towers that I could not enter, a crypt and the Duke's advisor's room. While roaming around the castle you get a birds eye view of your party. Enter a cave, or any type of underground structure and you switch to first person perspective you see what's in front of your party and everything looks like a crawl ways. Inside the crypt my elf found a secret door. There was no warning or way to tell, I just suddenly walked through a wall. This kind of thing happens throughout the game. There is really no searching or detailed exploring. Things happen all of a sudden. Outside the castle are the grounds and the surrounding valley. On the map it looks like a glorified golf course.

While roaming around I happened upon an occasional monster. I could not help but remember the Phantasy Star games; there you had an over-abundance of monsters, here there just weren't enough, and they're easily avoided. When it comes time to fight (outside), you enter the fight mode. Action stops, you must take control of your first character (who has a white box around him/her), then move them within range, and choose your choice of weapon which must already have been "readied." In case you can't tell, the problem I had with this game was all the little details and confusing game play. Much like *Advanced Dungeons & Dragons*, there are too many things to keep track of. I liked the magic users, for there is a plethora of spells, and some of the monsters you have to face are cool. *AD&D* fans will note some familiar yet ugly faces. Getting your characters up to a level where they won't die when fighting dead breath is time consuming. But once you get the hang of it, you can begin exploring in earnest.

Graphics are good 16-bit, but the characters and monsters are too small, and I thought the landscapes were limited. I liked the trees and a lot of the little extras they added, like the Roastmen's barbeque (and subsequent ambush), and the constantly moving water. I did notice a classic role-playing game quirk, the perspective problem. The strange slanted bird's-eye view, coupled with the usual problem of not being able to go around bushes and things that it looks like you'd fit through, made it difficult to get around.

Control and playing the game was difficult. You're always moving your players and trying to remember what button activates what weapon, how to memorize a spell or change it, and why can't I get around that stinking bush. Those who have played the computer *D&D* games will notice the usual menu selections, camping and spell changing, view map, transfer item, etc. One thing I wonder: why do they make you sit through the resting period when all it is is restoring your hitpoints? You're never attacked. Just replace the HP and get on with the game, right?

Challenge there's no shortage of. Mysteries and physical puzzles abound. Some cool, some used. For the most part you must use your head and figure out who or what is where and how to get it. Also, part of the challenge is building your characters up, going around beating up little creatures and running from the big boys. There are non-player characters (NPCs) to help you and you must remember what they tell you.

Sound: I liked the grunts and voices of the players, and some of the music was really outstanding. I love music that adds to the mood of a game, instead of it just being some-

thing I'd rather turn off. This game has excellent music and sounds.

Fans you *Wizard* fans will flock to this one, but Phantasy Star lovers probably won't like it as much. There is the distinct lack of control during underground first person combat, unlike Phantasy Star. You simply hit the button that has the best weapon and go nuts on it. But these are your characters, and you control them. If you're really good at it, the game will be fun; if you have trouble like I did, it may make it frustrating.

Overall quality is what I would call healthily above average. In spite of all my bellyaching, there are far more good points than bad. I would like to see first person battles with more control. Also make the characters and monsters bigger—they're just too small to see how good a job was done in their creation.

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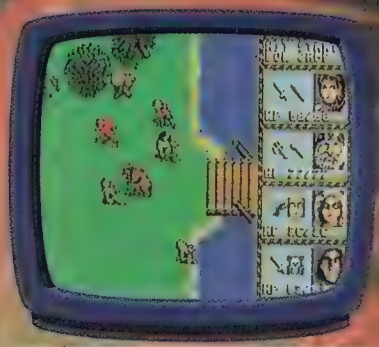

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BRUTES & BABES

DRAWING POWERFUL COMICS WITH BART SEARS

Hi, and welcome to Brutes and Babes. Since my last writing, I have terminated my association with DC Comics and have gone on a completely freelance work schedule. The first couple of things I'll be doing will be for Valiant. Starting with issue #14, I will be penciling *X-O Manowar,* which co-stars Turok, on a regular monthly basis. Then, starting in March or April, I will pencil the first three issues of *Turok, Dinosaur Hunter,* which I am pretty excited about. One quick thing before we get into this month's topic. The Cable cover contest announced last issue is still on, though I'm going to hold off on my rendition of the cover until issue #20. All right...now down to business.

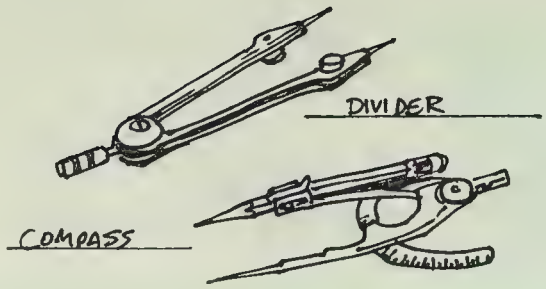
I've noticed, in talking to several people who read this column, that most people have trouble locating good drawing books, and that some of the things that I take for granted or accept as a given, aren't necessarily so. For example, in the past I have talked about several methods for constructing figures, the most popular and successful of which is the Block and Cube Method. Now that I realize that many of you don't understand or haven't been exposed to this simple constructive tool, I would like to remedy this situation. So, with that having been said, let's learn...

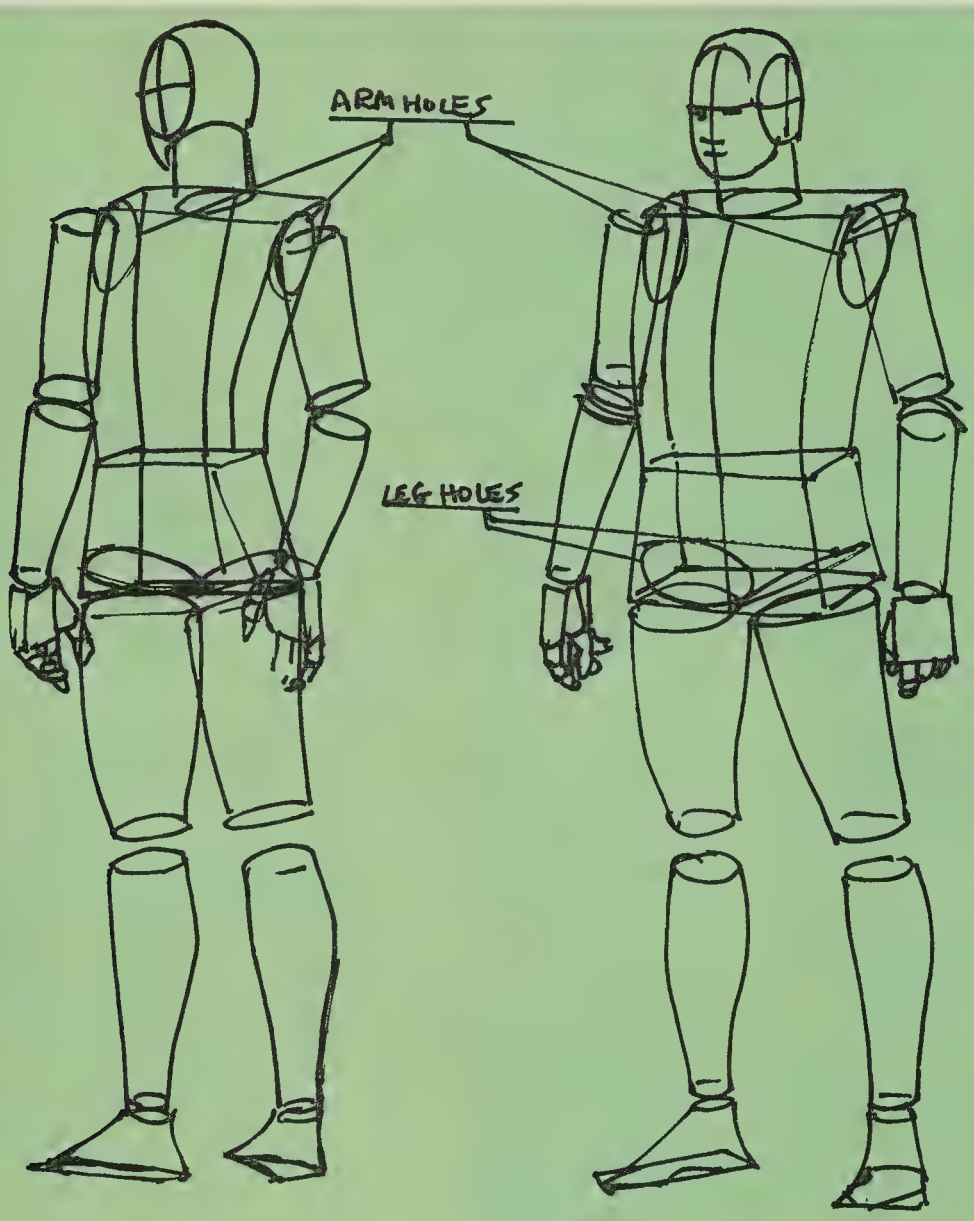
Block and Cube Construction

Here to the right I have drawn a simple eight-head-tall figure. Notice the simple block shapes for the chest and hips, the simple cylinders that make up the arms and legs. It looks easy, but let me warn you, it's not! PROPORTION! PROPORTION! PROPORTION! I can't emphasize enough the importance of...you guessed it, proportion. Nor am I going to waste space today detailing all the proportion head measures for all the different key elements of anatomy. I've gone over all of that before in this very column. What I will do is assign you the task of measuring and defining all the appropriate head measures off of this figure and those that follow. Remember to measure from joint to joint and for thickness side to side and front to back. Remember, think about what you are drawing—build that clear mental picture that you can turn and twist in your head.

Tools

At this time, I'd like to take a little break to recommend a helpful tool for measuring proportions and distance, a tool that is useful not just on figures but is helpful in many ways. It's called a divider (pictured here), and a normal school compass can be used much in the same way. All that you have to do is set the two points at whatever distance is necessary, say head size, and start measuring away. This tool is very useful in maintaining good proportion, plus it's simple and quick to use. Okay, commercial's over...back to work.





As you can see, I have drawn two more block and cube figures from two new angles. Please put your Wizard measuring cap on and start analyzing their proportion. Have fun and learn. You may have noticed that I didn't draw a side view block and cube figure. That, boys and girls, is because I would like you to draw one, using the knowledge of proportion you have learned. I have shown you the block and cube shapes; now it is time to grapple with them yourselves. Good luck!

I talk a lot about having a clear mental picture of a figure, and about form and space and mass and density. Once you have a clear grasp on proportion, I would highly recommend getting your hands on some clay and sculpting figures. Set up your proportion and start laying in those bubble masses. Twist it, turn it...study it. I think that seeing a form that you would draw actually taking up physical space, and having all of those other things I constantly harp about can be an invaluable learning tool...have fun!

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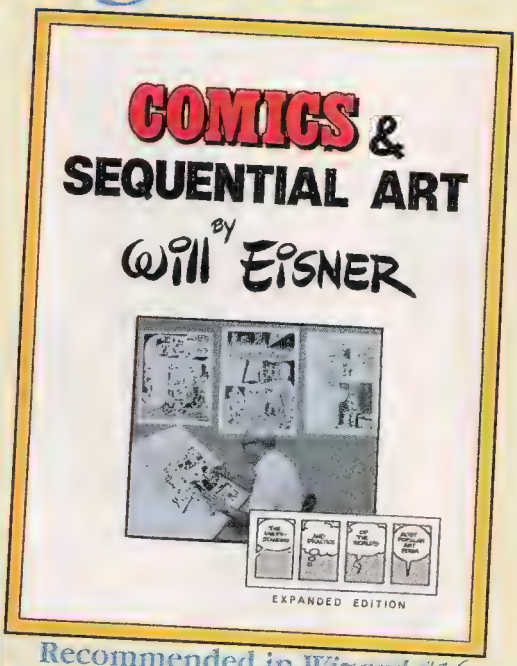
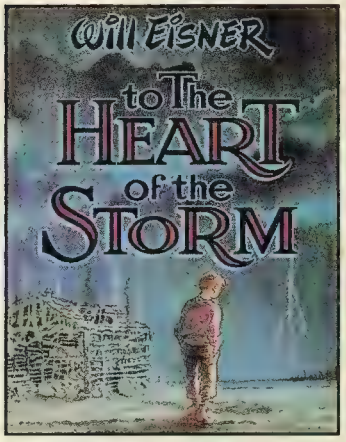


Recommended in *Wizard* #16 by Bart Sears!



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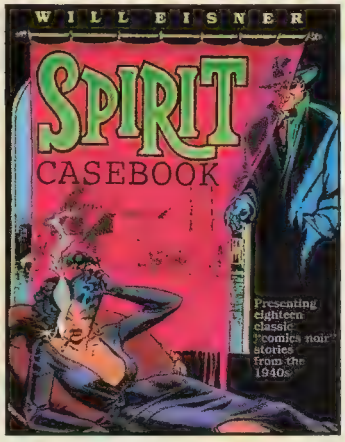

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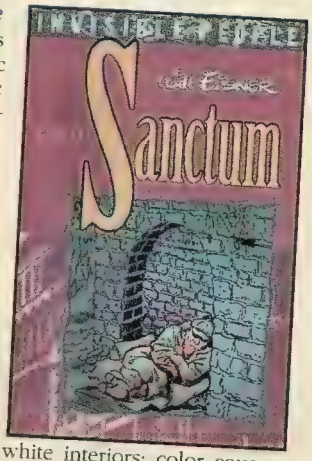

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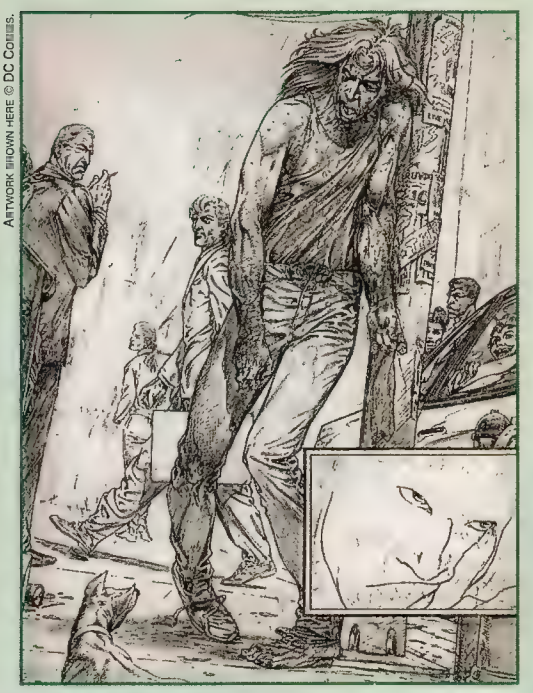
Here are some examples of how this block and cube construction method applies to finished comic art. Check them out, then get out your tracing paper and construct block and cube figures over your favorite artist's work (I would suggest such artists as Brian Bolland, Jose Luis-Garcia Lopez and Steve Rude).



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Artwork shown here © Voyager Communications.

Well, thanks for reading and keep up the good work. Keep sending stuff in, I love to see it. Drawing comics, like many specialized careers, takes a lot of hard work and dedication, so, keep plugging away, keep drawing but most of all, enjoy it! Thanks.

Let me see what you can do! Send your letters and questions to me, Bart Sears, at:

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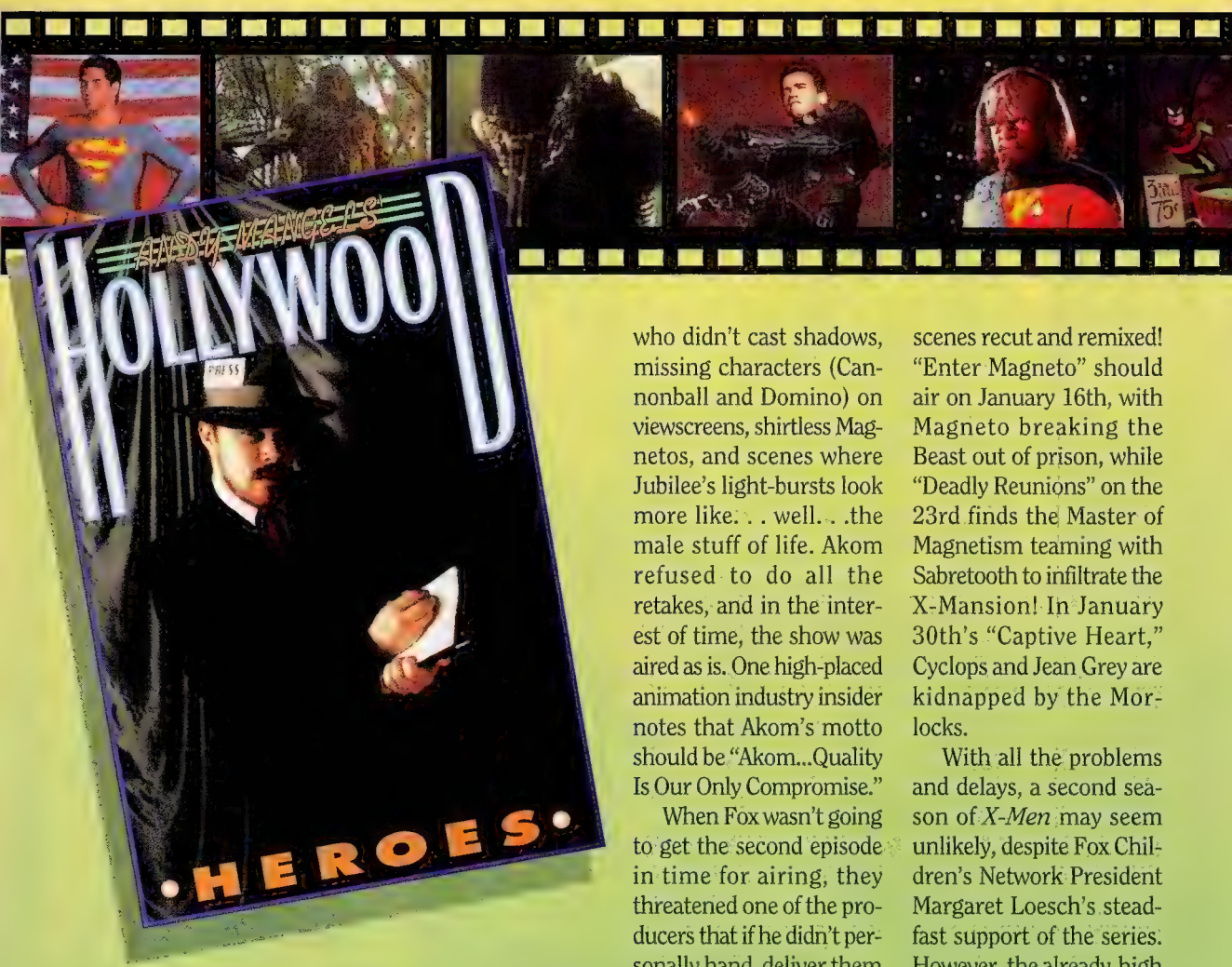

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TV NEWS

Well, *X-Men* "premiered" in October, but in a rather rag-tag manner. The constant delays in production are enough to make anyone believe an evil mutant is behind the whole affair. The problems have generally been the fault of Akom, the animation studio in Korea who is handling the show for Saban and Marvel. Akom was recently fired off *Batman: The Animated Series* for turning in inferior episodes, and almost no animation studio will hire them. They do, however, have the *X-Men* contract.

When they turned in the first episode, it needed literally hundreds of "retakes" (in which scenes incorrectly animated are fixed). Viewers could otherwise thrill to characters who didn't cast shadows, missing characters (Cannonball and Domino) on viewscreens, shirtless Magnetos, and scenes where Jubilee's light-bursts look more like. . . well. . .the male stuff of life. Akom refused to do all the retakes, and in the interest of time, the show was aired as is. One high-placed animation industry insider notes that Akom's motto should be "Akom...Quality Is Our Only Compromise."

When Fox wasn't going to get the second episode in time for airing, they threatened one of the producers that if he didn't personally hand deliver them the film from Korea on Monday, October 26th (five days before airing), he wouldn't get paid for the entire series. He made the deadline, though fifty scenes were missing! The editing was done in a one-day marathon, with no retakes, and the second episode aired.

Needless to say, Fox was not happy with the situation and yanked the series, replacing it with Ralph Bakshi's great warped *Mighty Mouse* series from a few years back. Currently Fox plans to re-air the first two episodes in a one-hour special on January 9th, with all the retakes done (so the shows will look loads better) and the scenes recut and remixed! "Enter Magneto" should air on January 16th, with Magneto breaking the Beast out of prison, while "Deadly Reunions" on the 23rd finds the Master of Magnetism teaming with Sabretooth to infiltrate the X-Mansion! In January 30th's "Captive Heart," Cyclops and Jean Grey are kidnapped by the Morlocks.

With all the problems and delays, a second season of *X-Men* may seem unlikely, despite Fox Children's Network President Margaret Loesch's steadfast support of the series. However, the already-high ratings did improve from week one to two, which does bring demographics up for the series, and hope for renewal. Similar production delays have occurred on *Ren & Stimpy*, *Simpsons* and *Batman:TAS* (though *Batman:TAS* has such a long lead-time that fans never knew of the problems). It seems that on shows where the production team actually cares about their product, the animation houses aren't able to get away with doing sloppy and cheap animation. Two other quick *X-Men* notes. The December video release will be "as originally aired on Fox Network." This means it will

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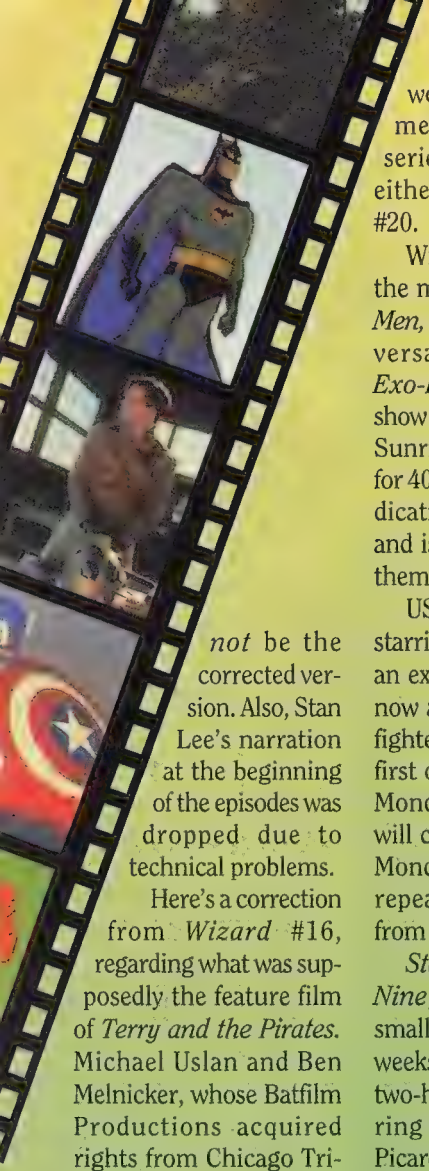

not be the corrected version. Also, Stan Lee's narration at the beginning of the episodes was dropped due to technical problems.

Here's a correction from *Wizard* #16, regarding what was supposedly the feature film of *Terry and the Pirates.* Michael Uslan and Ben Melnicker, whose Batfilm Productions acquired rights from Chicago Tribune Media Services, never sold the rights to Paramount. "I've always wanted to do what in my mind was the best comic book and comic strip ever," says Uslan. "Having done Batman, which to me was the best comic book, we wanted to do *Terry and the Pirates,* the best comic strip. Milton Caniff was a tremendous artist." Batfilm has joined forces with Bob Reheme and Mace Neufe (*Patriot Games*) for a major new television series! With a treatment by Bob McCullough (*Zorro, Bionic Woman*), *Terry and the Pirates* has generated a lot of excitement in Hollywood, and announcements about the TV series are forthcoming either in *Wizard* #19 or #20.

Will Meugniot, one of the men behind Fox's *X-Men,* is working with Universal Animation on *Exo-Force,* an animated show to be done by Japan's Sunrise. Universal hopes for 40 half-hours for a syndication deal in Fall '93, and is working on ties to theme parks in Japan.

USA Network's *Matrix,* starring Nick Mancuso as an ex-mob hitman who's now a mysterious crimefighter, will premiere the first of its 13 episodes on Monday, January 4th. It will continue to air every Monday from 10-11 pm, repeating on Saturdays from 6-7 pm.

Star Trek: Deep Space Nine will be hitting the small screen within a few weeks, starting out with a two-hour pilot guest-starring Patrick Stewart as Picard. By the way, Darrel McNeil, my ex-counterpart at *CBG* reminded me where I had heard of Rene Auberjonois (*Benson*) before. The man who plays Odo, the gelatinous shape-shifting security officer, was better known to superhero fans as the voice of DeSaad in *SuperFriends: The Legendary Super Powers Show* and *The Super Powers Team: Galactic Guardians*! Show producers are promising that Odo's shape-shifting scenes will be the next step beyond "morphing," the process made spectacular by *Terminator 2.*

Star Trek: Deep Space Nine will be joined in syndicated premiere by the big-budget series, *The Untouchables,* also from Paramount.

One more item on *ST:DS9.* It seems that J. Michael Straczynski originally pitched Paramount a sci-fi series about a space station strategically placed near a galaxy-spanning shortcut back in 1988. They turned him down then, and he worked the series up into *Babylon 5,* the third syndicated series from Warner in their Prime Time Network. Interestingly enough, when Paramount ann-ounced *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine* last year, not only were the settings similar, but so were some of the characters and situations! Fans will be able to judge the similarities between the two shows for themselves when *Babylon 5* debuts in March.

CBS is trying to beat *ST:DS9* to the airwaves and spaceways with *Space Rangers,* a new one-hour show from Richard Lewis (*Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves*). The series stars Jeff Kaake and Linda Hunt as a pair of Space Rangers in the year 2014. CBS wants to have it on the air in time to beat both *ST:DS9* and the other new syndicated sci-fi shows that will soon be competing for audience attention.

USA Network's *Swamp Thing* will be continuing all-new episodes from January through March. This "all-female-guest-star" month, you can look forward to Tressa's sister coming to Houma in the midst of a hurricane in "Eye of the Storm" on January 9th, while Sunderland's daughter comes to town in pursuit of Swamp Thing in "Vendetta," on January 16th. In "The Hurting" on the 23rd, Swamp Thing helps a young girl leap back in time to make peace with her mother, while "The Burning Times" on the 30th sees Will falling in love with a witch, but she's no Samantha!

The Trouble With Girls may soon be blazing its way across your TV screens. Gerard Jones and Will Jacob, the creators of *Girls,* have finished the 30-minute pilot script for Chesler Productions (*Hitchhiker*). The potential series will be produced by Fox for HBO to air. A six-episode order is expected any day soon, and all concerned are hopeful that the show could start shooting this spring for a winter '93 premiere! Go On *Girls*!

In the hopper for Marvel potential projects is *Daredevil,* now making another play at live-action life. Lorimar is interested, according to Stan Lee, and Fox is almost ready to order a pilot episode.

Fox's *Batman: The Animated Series* is hard to schedule, as shows may or may not be finished by planned airdate. However, upcoming episodes include the two-part origin of Robin in "Robin's Reckoning", the story of the man who built the Batmobile in "The Mechanic," and a sequel to "Night of the Ninja" in "Day of the Samurai."

Batgirl makes her first

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and only appearances in the two-part "Shadow of the Bat," and another two-parter highlights Rhas Al Ghul and Talia in "The Demon's Quest." A petty crook thinks he's "The Man Who Killed Batman," and Penguin makes appearances in both "Blind as a Bat," and "Birds of a Feather." Clayface strikes again in "Mud Slide," and odd Batman villains Maxie Zeus and the Crime Doctor make appearances in "Fire From Olympus," and "Paging the Crime Doctor."

The final episodes of *Batman: The Animated Series* for this season may include any of the previous shows, or they could be the Ventriloquist's appearance in "Read My Lips," or Zatanna's one-shot in "Zatanna." And if old villains and heroes aren't your cup-a-tea, look for a new invisible man to strike in "See No Evil," and strange voodoo dolls to take over Gotham in "The Worry Men." Whew!

Fox is still unclear on future plans for *Batman: TAS,* and plans change daily. It seems very likely that ten of the best episodes will go to a prime-time viewing this summer, and both the *Catwoman* series and a new *Robin* series are in discussion! A second season has not been ruled out, nor has it been committed to yet.

Work has begun on the 70-90 minute *Batman: TAS* film, to be released for Christmas 1993 on video. The story was a collaboration between all the main *Batman:TAS* writers, and segments will be directed by the four main directors of the series.

Disney, banking on the success of *Aladdin,* has been working on a hush-hush animated series for the last year, but an announcement is forthcoming due to the almost-guaranteed popularity of the new movie. The series is slated for either the Disney Afternoon, or farmed out for network viewing on Saturday mornings. It concentrates mainly on the adventures of Aladdin and the Princess. Robin Williams' genie character will not be appearing.

Ted Turner scheduled an odd promotional move for his flailing Cartoon Network, which, despite high viewer requests, most cable stations don't carry. On November 27th, the toons took over both TBS and TNT for an all-cartoon 14-hour marathon on three different channels! Turner may repeat the move around Christmas and other holidays.

New World recently paid $56,000 to Rick Hoberg and Dennis Mallonee to bring their time-traveling *Eternity Smith* comic series to the small screen. A pilot is on tap from Goodman-Rosen Productions, who already shoot *Zorro* for the Family Channel, with Mallonee acting as an associate producer on the pilot. Given the storyline of the *Eternity Smith* comic series, the high-concept pitch for the TV executives will probably be "Terminator meets The Heights"!

Ren & Stimpy is supposedly back on track, with Nickelodeon promising the airing of 13 new episodes, now in production, before the season's end late this Spring. Some critics have bemoaned creator John Kricfalusi's missing touches, noting that his Spumco partner, Bob Camp, only produces episodes about Stimpy's stupidity. From what I've seen of the new material, I think they're right.

The Sci-Fi Channel's most interesting show would appear to be the *Sci-Fi Series Collection,* which spotlights short-lived shows and often includes interview bits with writers, producers, and directors. In January, the *Collection* wraps up *Probe* on 12/24-1/6, and then goes to the eight-episode *Otherworld* from 1/7-1/19. Then Christopher George and Jessica Walter star in *The Immortal,* beginning with a special 90-minute pilot

Batman: The Animated Series ™ &© 1992 DC Comics, Inc. Photo from Warner Bros.

With the success of Batman: TAS, *plans are underway for two new Fox/DC cartoon projects.*

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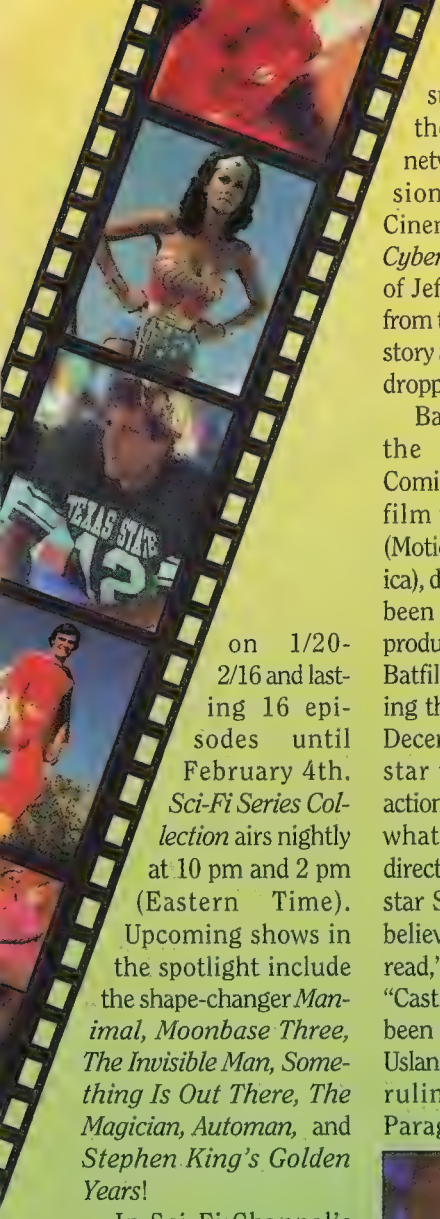

on 1/20-2/16 and lasting 16 episodes until February 4th. *Sci-Fi Series Collection* airs nightly at 10 pm and 2 pm (Eastern Time). Upcoming shows in the spotlight include the shape-changer *Manimal, Moonbase Three, The Invisible Man, Something Is Out There, The Magician, Automan,* and *Stephen King's Golden Years*!

In Sci-Fi Channel's super-hero news, the cycle begins again for reruns of *The Incredible Hulk* every Monday through Friday and Sunday, and *Powers of Matthew Star* continues every Sunday.

FEATURE FILMS

August Entertainment is working on *The Lawnmower Man II,* no longer connected to Stephen King's name (after a major lawsuit by King took his name off the first film). The current version of the story finds an ambitious doctor experimenting with new subjects and loosing them into the cyber-network. An earlier version with New Line Cinema was to be called *CyberJob,* with the return of Jeff Fahey's character from the first film, but that story appears to have been dropped.

Batfilm is producing the original Harvey Comics' *Black Cat* feature film with Brad Krevoy (Motion Pic Corp of America), despite what may have been read about another producer in *Comics Scene.* Batfilm will be announcing the writer-director in December, as well as the star who will play the action-packed heroine. But what about announced director John Paragon and star Sean Young? "Don't believe everything you've read," says Michael Uslan. "Casting has not officially been dealt with yet." Still, Uslan said that they are not ruling out Young or Paragon, just that they aren't saying.

Adam Link, Robot, is also in development at Batfilm, for a feature, with a major writer and director to be announced soon. Batfilm has two more new properties to announce soon, for feature films.

Academy Award-winner Kenneth Branagh (*Henry V*) will both direct and star in Francis Ford Coppola's big-budget *Mary Shelley's Frankenstein,* set to go before cameras sometime in January. Branagh, who's also been long connected to *Watchmen,* will play Victor Frankenstein. *Dracula* writer Jim Hart will co-produce with Coppola, while newcomer Steph Lady will now script. Shooting will mainly be in England during the spring, and look for a Christmas release for the film. Last month, I reported Joel Schumacher would direct, but he bowed out and Branagh stepped in.

Terry Hase (*Mad Max*) is writing the script for Columbia's *Black Panther,* though Wesley Snipes' schedule is full for the next year or so. If he's going to do the project, it'll be sometime in '94.

The third Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles movie has been given it's sub-title. It's now *TMNT III: A Feudal Fable,* and it's due out just in time for Easter, most likely premiering April 9th. We'll have an exclusive set visit report and photos next issue!

Entertainment Weekly recently reported that Marvel is considering a live-action *Wolverine* film for 1994. Sure, Marvel is, but are any film companies?

Keep an eye on the skies, when *The Meteor Man* streaks into theaters this Spring. Robert Townsend wrote, directed, and stars as the title character, who gains super-powers from a falling celestial object. The almost

The Lawnmower Man © 1992 New Line Cinema. Photo: Angel Studios.

Can't get enough of virtual reality? A possible Lawnmower Man II *film is being discussed, though Stephen King wants no part of it.*

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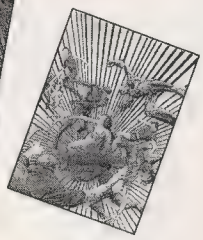

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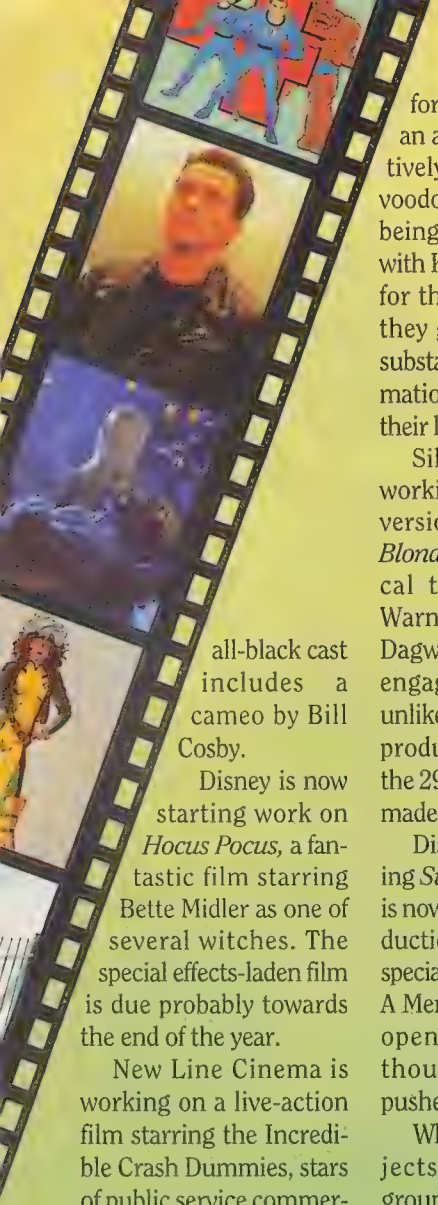

all-black cast includes a cameo by Bill Cosby.

Disney is now starting work on *Hocus Pocus,* a fantastic film starring Bette Midler as one of several witches. The special effects-laden film is due probably towards the end of the year.

New Line Cinema is working on a live-action film starring the Incredible Crash Dummies, stars of public service commercials and toy lines. CBS and Nelvana are also developing an animated series to air this fall, although it will be preceded by an animated *Incredible Crash Dummies Special* sometime this spring.

Peter Briggs, the Englishman who wrote the *Aliens Vs. Predator: The Hunt* script, is now working on the new draft of *Judge Dredd.*

Meanwhile, Gerard Jones, the comic man behind *Justice League Europe, Green Lantern,* and *Wonder Man* (among scores of others). Jones recently finished a script for Silver Pictures, for an animated film tentatively called *Arrow.* The voodoo detective story is being tested for Warner, with Kroyer Films bidding for the animation job. If they get it, they'll use a substantially different animation style than that in their latest film, *Ferngully.*

Silver Pictures is also working on a big-screen version of Chic Young's *Blondie.* This one, a musical to be released by Warner, will not feature Dagwood toting guns or engaging in car chases, unlike most Silver films. If produced, this would be the 29th *Blondie* film ever made!

Disney's finished-filming *Super Mario Brothers* is now in serious post-production to add the many special effects for the show. A Memorial Day weekend opening is planned, though that may be pushed back.

While most Marvel projects never get off the ground, and those that do are really bad, Stan Lee recently talked about Marvel's current movie plans. Don't get your hopes up too high though. Here goes: Wes Craven is supposed to be writing *Dr. Strange,* while John Milius (*Conan*) wants to write and produce an animated Thor feature. Producers all around Hollywood are discussing projects with Marvel, with Gale Ann Hurd (*Aliens*) talking the *Incredible Hulk* with Columbia, George Kasmotos (*Rambo*) after *Ghost Rider,* Richard Donner (*Superman*) dishing *X-Men* with Columbia, and Oliver Stone supposedly expressing interest in *Elektra: Assassin.* And, ohjoy, L.L.Cool J wants to play the lead in *Blade, Vampire Hunter,* and is trying to get New Line interested.

Warner is putting up a lot of money for the new French sci-fi film, *Zaltman,* directed by Luc Besson. The budget is estimated at $80-100 million! Are we sure this isn't Ross Perot's life story?

Will Freddy Krueger slash again? Rumors in Variety have put New Line in a precarious balance. The industry newsmag reported that a new movie is in development for 1993, but New Line doesn't have it planned. According to my sources in the company, if another Freddy film is made, it wouldn't be on screens until at least 1994. However, for those who are hungry for the man with the Lee Press-On "Power" Nails, check out my *Nightmare On Elm Street: The Beginning* series, now wrapping up at Innovation.

New Line does have a new *Friday the 13th* /Jason film scheduled to premiere in March. The ninth film in the series is said to be a radical departure from previous films, and a more supernatural story is promised. Comic book rights for the deal are being sewn up as I type this, but I can't give you the details just yet. Next month, I promise.

Nightmare On Elm Street 4 © New Line Cinema. Photo by Gary Farr.

Freddy's dead? Maybe not. Rumor has it a new Freddy film may be in the works for late 1993.

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Dr. Giggles has done poorly at the box office, meaning Dark Horse and Largo aren't likely to do a sequel any time soon. The film's first week brought in a disappointing $3.5 million, falling lower than the less-hyped *Pure Country* which opened the same day. Even being the only new horror film out Halloween week, *Dr. Giggles* didn't laugh all the way to the bank...unless you're talking Blood Bank.

The Beverly Hillbillies movie will be out Fourth of July weekend, directed by Penelope Spheeris, whose name sounds like she should be a character in the film.

Tri-Star looks to be the fantasy company to beat in 1994. They've recently scooped up the rights to all of the characters from Toho's fifteen *Godzilla* films. Tri-Star plans its own *Godzilla* film for mid-'94, plus a sequel if all goes well. The film company is also doing Terry Gilliam's next pic, *Cartooned,* produced by Laura Ziskin, and they're doing Gale Ann Hurd's next action film *Taking Liberty.* Perhaps their biggest news is that they've tied up the distribution rights to James Cameron's *Spider-Man* film, now languishing over at Carolco. Tri-Star plans a 1994 release for the wall-crawler. Don't hold your breath just yet though.

The Shadow knows what scares you, and Capella International has the current version in hand, produced by Martin Bregman. The script finds The Shadow facing down Genghis Khan's descendant, who wants to cook the Big Apple by dropping an atomic bomb on it.

Clive Barker's newest novel, *The Thief Of Always,* is on its way to becoming an animated feature film. With work starting soon by the Canadian-based Nelvana, the picture is planned for a Halloween 1994 release.

Rumors on the Paramount front find the next *Star Trek* film being discussed with cast members of *Star Trek* and *Star Trek: The Next Generation*!

Tales From The Crypt will be making its jump from the small screen back to the big screen later in '93. The popular HBO series (which will continue with a new season this Fall), produced by Joel Silver, Robert Zemeckis, Richard Donner, Walter Hill, and David Giler, will also be a trio of films. Walter Hill will be directing the first film, lensing in North Carolina as you read this. It's likely that Robert Zemeckis will direct the second film, and Richard Donner will shoot the third, after he's done with *Anne Rice's The Witching Hour* in January. The movies will be based on original stories, though the animatronic Crypt Keeper will open and close each film. The $10-12 million budget far outweighs the first *Tales From The Crypt* movie, made back in 1972.

Paramount's thriller pic *Sliver,* starring sex-goddess Sharon Stone, is due in your theaters in May. She plays the woman in jeopardy this time. Paramount's sequels to *The Addams Family* and *Wayne's World* are on tap, but don't look likely for 1993 release. Another *Saturday Night Live* skit-to-feature-film, *The Coneheads,* is due out this year.

TriMark is filming the sequel to their modest hit *Warlock.* Julian Sands returns as the evil sorcerer intent on destroying the Earth in *Warlock: The Armageddon.* Anthony Hickox directs.

No news on Roger Corman's *The Fantastic Four,* but we should have some for next month. Not much news on *Superman: The New Movie,* set to start production very soon, other than that it may be filmed back-to-back with a second Superman film.

More news next month about Dark Horse Entertainment/Largo's full slate of productions, including *Aliens Vs. Predators* (to be directed by Roland Emmerich), *Concrete, Organic Future, Kings In Disguise, Time Cop,* and *Legend of Hell House.*

VIDEO & THEATER

Beauty and the Beast had unprecedented sales on its first day of video release, selling over 1 million copies! Having already doubled the sales of *Fantasia,* the gorgeous Disney film easily catapulted past all video sales records to the top position. It'll take something awfully big to top this fairy tale!

Ummm, if you didn't know, the "classic" of modern celluloid has now hit the video stores as of November's end. Yes, you too can torture your comic book friends by tying them to chairs and forcing a back-to-back viewing of the new *Brenda Starr* (with Brooke Shields) video, *Captain America,* and *The Punisher.*

Paramount Video's new horror film, *The Lightning Incident,* is being released on December 22nd, and you can catch it at your local video stores. Nancy McKeon plays a pregnant woman who has horrifying dreams. When her newborn is kidnapped by a satanic cult, she must use her newly-awakened psychic powers to track them on a coast-to-coast race to save her child.

That wraps up this month's full-'o-news edition of *Hollywood Heroes.* We'll see you back here next month as we take a look behind the shells of *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles III: A Feudal Fable,* plus more news, opinions, and surprises! See you next issue, right here at Hollywood Heroes!

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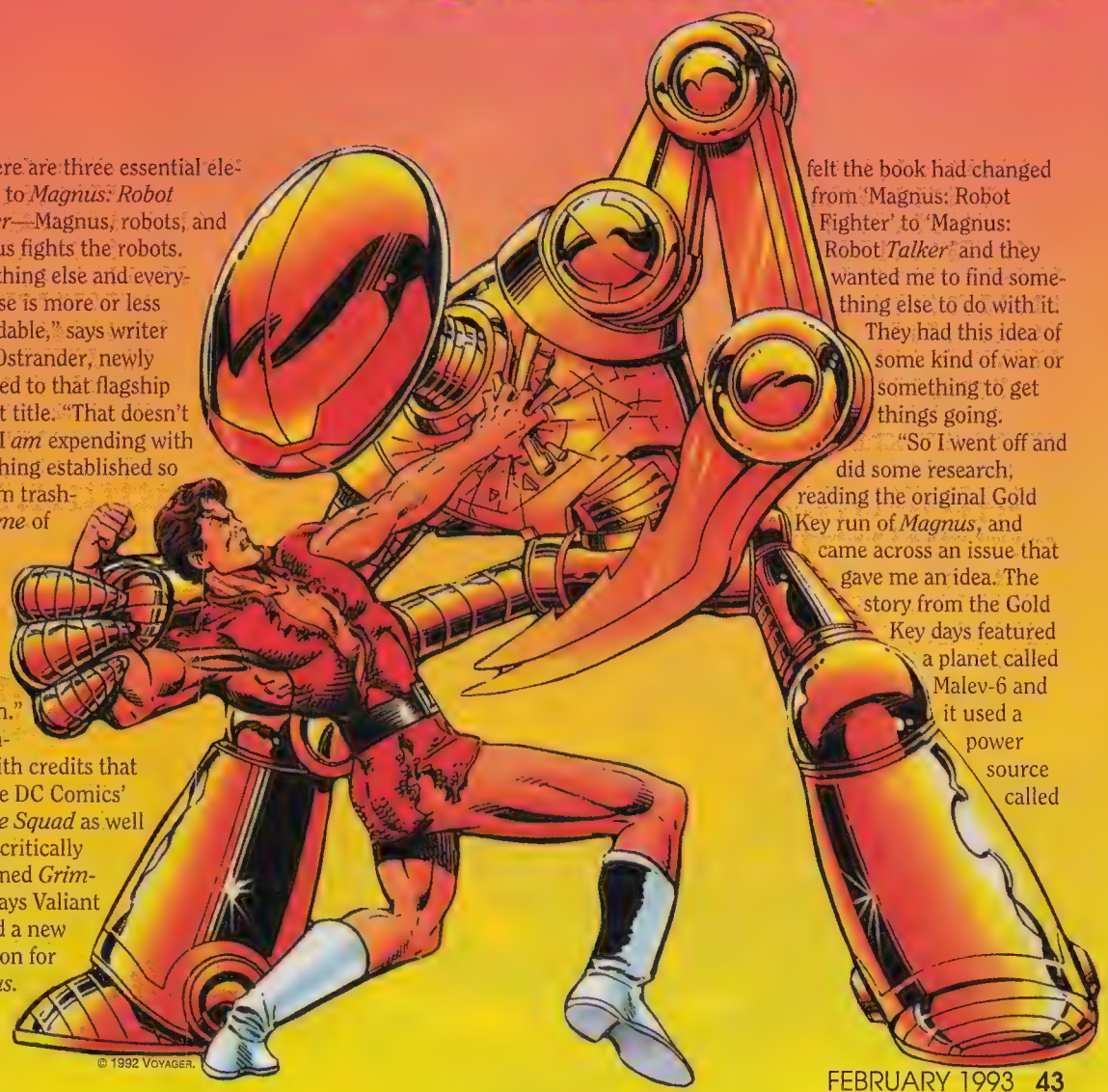
STEEL-Smashing Hands and PLANET-Tossing Ghosts

BY PATRICK DANIEL O'NEILL

John Ostrander takes on the formidable task of revamping not one but two classic comics characters —Magnus and the Spectre.



"There are three essential elements to *Magnus: Robot Fighter*—Magnus, robots, and Magnus fights the robots. Everything else and everyone else is more or less expendable," says writer John Ostrander, newly assigned to that flagship Valiant title. "That doesn't mean I *am* expending with everything established so far...I'm trashing *some* of them, though." Ostrander, with credits that include DC Comics' *Suicide Squad* as well as the critically acclaimed *Grimjack*, says Valiant wanted a new direction for *Magnus*. "They felt the book had changed from 'Magnus: Robot Fighter' to 'Magnus: Robot *Talker*' and they wanted me to find something else to do with it. They had this idea of some kind of war or something to get things going.

"So I went off and did some research, reading the original Gold Key run of *Magnus*, and came across an issue that gave me an idea. The story from the Gold Key days featured a planet called Malev-6 and it used a power source called

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'ectotheric energy,' which looks like sorcerous energy but is actually scientific—I've defined it as connected to quantum mechanics, so now we have quasi-quantum mechanic theories here. Comic-book science," he laughs.

"Magnus thought he had destroyed Malev-6, but the core of the planet has survived and come to Earth. The robots are called Malevelants. And their first plan is to take over NorthAm and by the end of the first issue, they've done it. They've hooked into the main brain and they now control all the robots in NorthAm. At this point, we'll start intersecting with the Spirit Protector in the *Rai* book—it'll be very closely connected—as the battle goes on throughout the world."

Essentially, as Ostrander tells it, Magnus has to alert the other nations to the danger, try to contain the Malevelants to NorthAm, and in the process becomes a one-man guerrilla army. Other characters will join in the fight. "All the robots will be under the control of the Malev emperor and that gives Magnus lots and lots of robots to fight—because the Malevelants think humans have three uses: certain humans can generate the ectotheric energy through their thoughts; some can be slave labor to build more robots; and the rest are mulch," Ostrander notes.

So what happens to Magnus' civilization? The world of milespires and gophs and cloud cloppies? "NorthAm's basically going to be trashed," Ostrander admits. "The gophs trashed, the milespires trashed...and Magnus will be fighting this ongoing war. The first storyline is a four-issue arc called 'Armageddon: 4002,' in which we put the book in fourth gear in the first issue and then throw it into overdrive in the subsequent issues.

"Some of the supporting cast will be killed off. I will be bringing back one former member of the cast, although not in the first couple of issues. Some of the other members of the cast will be changed along the way, as the war progresses."

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The war storyline will form the basis for the book for the next two to three years, Ostrander says. And he says he's not concerned with appearing to be the latest in a line of writers to tear apart a previously utopian society in comics.

"Valiant had already shown us

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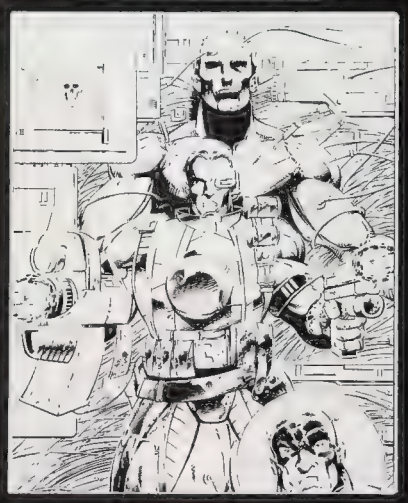

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that the bright golden future we saw in Gold Key *Magnus* wasn't quite so bright and golden; what was seen as a bright golden future was something of a fascistic society and incapable of defending itself," he points out. "In the course of the series, Magnus has become very disenchanted with the milespires. Basically, this is a continuation of that and—over and above—I don't feel any great commandment to continue a concept that, even in the '60s, didn't particularly hold water. I'm hoping that people will come in with my first issue. I can get them grounded in the basics real fast, and then go on from there—just floor it. Give them exciting stories, stories with a focus.

"Eventually, we'll spotlight some of the supporting cast; try to take those who survive and make them interesting, but working from what is already there. I don't like to just trash the entire past—saying forget about it, it didn't exist. I like to build from what's there."

Despite all that, Ostrander remains impressed by the classic *Magnus* of 25 years past: "One of the things I'm struck by is that—given what seems a limited concept, 'Magnus: Robot Fighter'—the Gold Key series got into a wide range of stories. They went under the sea, they went out into space; there'd be issues in which Magnus virtually hit nobody, and still they told very interesting stories. There were strong elements of science fiction in it. One problem is that I don't think the robots, as designed, really work in today's comics market. I think Magnus needs a stronger and very ruthless foe. I think heroes are defined by the foes they have; the more dire the enemy, the more heroic the hero. For something like Magnus, you need a major-league threat. I want to clear some space in the story-telling environment; if you get too locked into a particular concept, you lose the ability to surprise people. I really want *Magnus* to be a high-adrenaline book."

In the meantime, Ostrander is also reinterpreting a long-time character for DC Comics. With art from Tom Mandrake, he is bringing new "life" to one of comics' most enduring spirits—the Spectre.

"I've tried to do a synthesis and reinterpretation of all the previous versions of the Spectre, which would then yield a real strong continuing series. As Mike Gold said, 'Almost any writer of any quality can do one, two, or three real good Spectre stories. It's after that they hit a problem. Where do you go from here?'"

Ostrander admits the character comes with some major stumbling blocks for a writer. "There are certain problems inherent with the Spectre; there has to be an iconography—images that you associate with the Spectre," he notes. "This is the being who tosses around comets, as in the classic '60s cover; he is also the being who devised gruesome, grisly ends for his enemies, as in the Mike Fleisher series of the '70s. There's a visceral kick to that that people like a lot. But if that's all there is, then you run out of steam. And, if you have a character that powerful, how do you fashion a viable threat for him? What can you do with the character—ultimately, does the Spectre work better as a supporting character or occasional guest star than as the star of his own book?"

In Ostrander's version, the Spectre is Jim Corrigan. Jim Corrigan is dead and has been dead since the late 1930s. "So what you get down to is who was Corrigan?" he points out. "He was a very hard-nose plain-clothes cop—he busted the bad guys. The courts and God decided the rest. So how the Spectre acts comes out of what Jim Corrigan was when he was alive.

"When he's around human beings, he becomes a little more human, but also a little more vulnerable. The longer he's away from humanity, you get a colder figure, more like the Fleisher Spectre. So we will blend aspects of all his previous incarnations, in so far as we can. I'm not going to reconcile every element of every past version, but there will be a piece of each in this one, weaving them together into a single, coherent whole."

Is this the version of the Spectre that finally lives on? If the readers agree with Ostrander's vision, this time ol' Moon-face could haunt the stands for a long time. ★

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END OF

THE DEATH OF SUPERMAN HERALDS THE END

Fifty-four years ago, the creation of a single character virtually created the genre of the superhero, made the fledgling comic-book industry a success, and initiated a "golden age." This past fall, the "death" of that same character epitomized the nature of the current comic-book business, and made clear why many long-time fans fear that comics are in the midst of what can only be called the "gimmick age."

Superman's first appearance in *Action Comics* #1 (June, 1938) was a watershed for comics: he was followed by a host of imitators and colleagues, from Batman to Captain Marvel to the Human Torch.

Many of those heroes of the Golden Age were called "gimmick characters," even by their creators. Superman, after all, had been designed as the man who could do everything in a, well, super way. Most of his successors, however, had only one thing they could do that was special—a gimmick: Flash was super-fast, Hawkman flew like a bird, Sub-Mariner breathed underwater, the Torch was a flaming man.

But the gimmicks were only in the characters. The stories and the art, though often crude by today's standards, were the finest their writers and illustrators could turn out...and it was the content of those stories, not the packaging, that counted. A badly written or drawn comic was destined to flop, because the audience wouldn't settle for half measures.

And that emphasis on content over form remained true for more than 50 years. When publishers tried packaging gimmicks—comics that were bigger than normal size, smaller than normal size, whatever—they always failed. It wasn't what the comic looked like that was important, it was what came inside.

But something happened a few years ago. The publishers started experimenting with new kinds of gimmicks. In the beginning they were quite simple—special covers to mark newsstand editions as different from direct-market editions, for example. But the publishers found that there were some comics buyers—not all, certainly, maybe not even a majority; but a sizable percentage—who would buy both versions. And, if one version was thought to be more rare than the other, they would buy even more of that one—in the hope that its value would increase over time.

This encouraged the publishers to try new and more extravagant gimmicks: not just two versions of a comic book, but three or four or five; putting the comic in a bag, so that—in order to keep the comic book "mint"—the collector would feel obligated to buy two copies, one to open and read, the other to store unopened; comics with special coupons to be sent in for even rarer

AN ERA

OF WHAT BEGAN MORE THAN 50 YEARS AGO...

BY PATRICK DANIEL O'NEILL

special edition comics, so that, again, more than one copy was needed (since removing the coupon would make one copy less than mint).

Then came special cover treatments—metallic inks, gatefolds, die-cuts, embossing, holograms, and prisms.

More and more what was in between the covers became unimportant; what counted was what you could do on the cover to make the issue seem special. And each of these "special" comics was publicized and hyped as never before. While never actually telling the collector that the issue in question would increase in value, the publisher never tried to end speculation along those lines.

Every once in a while, a story and the new publisher interest in gimmicks would coincide...and then the publisher would do his best to attract attention from outside the collector market. Normally, I would say, "Terrific—let's get some new blood into this field." But the emphasis was never on the ongoing worth of the stories being told, just on the news value of this single story...and, again, on the possible further value of the issue in question. Marriages, engagements, the coming out of gay characters—it was all grist for the mill.

And once the hype was over, once the news story had run its course, all the non-collectors would leave the comics shops, the "special" issue in their hot little hands, destined to be encased in plastic and never read. And sales of the title—and of all comics in general—would return to where they were before the excitement. *Status quo ante.*

Now the history of comics has come full circle. The latest news story is the "death" of Superman. It was in the news two months before it was published as a comic: it seemed like it was in the news continually before it was published. And the issue in question, *Superman* #75, came complete with gimmicks—a black armband and other gewgaws.

By now, though, the excitement has worn off. The non-collectors all have their copies, carefully stored away. Most of them will never think of comics again—until, somewhere down the line, after the Man of Steel returns from the dead.

and DC wants to hype another storyline to the hilt, many of them will turn to each other and ask, "Isn't he dead?" ☆

SUPERMAN AND SUPERMAN ARTWORK SHOWN HERE ™ & © 1993 DC COMICS. RIGHT IN PLACE

By:
Patrick Daniel O'Neill

ELFQ

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Fifteen years ago, Wendy and Richard Pini were among the first comics creators to take advantage of the fledgling direct-sales market to publish and distribute their own comic-book series, *Elfquest*. After a few issues, it became one of the small successes to which the champions of self-publishing can point... and make the Pinis into exemplars of "doing it your way."

Today, *Elfquest* is available not only as a comic book, but as a series of trade paperbacks, a prose anthology of short stories, and a record album. Where do Wendy and Richard—and their company, WaRP Graphics—go from here?

WIZARD: The biggest news in terms of changes in *Elfquest* is one—the mainline *Elfquest* book, now called *Elfquest: The Hidden Years*, is now in color; and two—that there is now a second book, *New Blood*, in which non-Wendy and Richard Pini Elfquest stories are being told.

Let's take *Hidden Years* first. What was the impetus to go to color.

RICHARD: We had been working on the black-and-white books for years and years, and they were doing well. Around the beginning of 1992, we had finished *Kings of the Broken Wheel*, and Wendy was beginning work on the next series, *Hidden Years*—the stories that are not part of an ongoing story, as all of *Elfquest* had been until now. We wanted to put a magnifying glass on some of the characters outside the main continuity.

We felt a vague dissatisfaction with what we were doing, but couldn't put a finger on it. Like 17-

QUEST

The Wendy And Richard Pini Interview

year cicadas—they spend 17 years hibernating underground and one day they know it's time to crawl out. We felt that something wanted to be done differently...we just didn't know what.

WENDY: Also, we were motivated in the sense that there's a vast color-prejudice among the comic-reading public. There are a lot of people out there who simply don't feel a drawing finished unless it's colored. We'd been publishing the color collections of reprinted *Elfquest* material, but the consideration was, "Wouldn't it be nifty to have something regularly on the stands on a bi-monthly basis in color?" We could collect it together into the reprint volumes, already colored and rendered in almost a fairy-tale illustration style, rather than the flat-color animation style we had used.

RICHARD: The whole comic-book market was and is undergoing a pretty dramatic upheaval. We felt that, somehow, without changing what we were doing, we wanted to change what we were doing. [laughter] We thought we needed to give *Elfquest* a kick in the pants...and the decision was made to go to color. As I have said before, to come crashing full-strength into the 1940s, and start publishing a color comic book, as most people had been doing for 50 years.

This turned out to be just the first domino in a string of dominoes: The change to color acknowledging that the market is different, acknowledging that there are certain factors you want to take in account, as a comic-book publisher—to try to get what you're doing seen by as many people as possible.

So color for *Hidden Years* was the first step, *New Blood* is the second step, and the third, fourth and so on will be as we introduce more titles.

WENDY: Talk about the plans for the new titles. I love to listen to this stuff because I don't have anything to do with it. [laughter] The goose that laid the golden egg is pooped.

RICHARD: All of this comes because there are a lot of things that are non-comics related, some even non-*Elfquest* related, that we want to do. On the other hand, the fans of *Elfquest*, the read-

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ers of *Elfquest*, have for years wanted to know when we're going to put out more stuff. Those two goals are mutually contradictory. We're only two people and we're going just as fast as we can.

The concept behind *New Blood* was to see whether to not other artists and writers could do *Elfquest*-universe stories and whether or not *Elfquest* readers would accept these different visions. With the first issue of *New Blood*, we've discovered that we would do them, but we're not looking for people to clone what we do. The first issue has people like John Byrne, Barry Blair, Lea Hernandez, Gary Kato, Bill Neville...and the series is off and running. And the feedback we've gotten....

WENDY: We've been getting some pretty wild feedback. [laughter]

RICHARD: Most of it, the majority of it, is accepting and favorable. We get letters saying this is great; this is intriguing;, why didn't you do this before; this was a wonderful spooky story; I laughed my butt off at this funny story. Some of the very diehard *Elfquest* readers are saying, "I don't accept this. It's not the way you two have done it for 15 years and I can't cope with that."

WENDY: There are comments like, "What would Wendy think of what you're doing to *Elfquest*?!" And I respond, "I worked on this book!"

WIZARD: It's not like Richard went into a closet someplace and put this thing together without telling you about it.

RICHARD: Publisher is one of the hats I wear. Because of that, letters come to me that say, "You big nasty publisher—you have taken *Elfquest* and performed sacrilege upon it. What would Wendy say?"

Of course, Wendy was there during the whole process. She saw everything that came in.

WENDY: I have to tell you one funny story. John Byrne said he would do a story for us so long as he could take some very beloved characters and absolutely upset the *Elfquest* fans by completely blowing up a situation.

I said to John, "Well, you know those awful relationships guys get into with their mothers?" And he said, "Say no more!" and came up with a Winnowill/Two-Edge story.

Richard told me just the other day that John's pages came back to us from an irate mother, saying, "This story is sick!" John will be very pleased to hear that he did blow up a situation.

RICHARD: People are really funny, because this one mother did send the book back with pages marked and commented upon in regard to what she didn't find appropriate for her son. I found it amusing and ironic because there was nothing she had marked as inappropriate for her 12-year-old son that we had not done in one form or another in the previous 15 years. Apparently, it was okay for her even younger son, as long as Wendy drew it.

WENDY: I guess there's something incredibly safe about me or something.

RICHARD: Couldn't prove that by me! [laughter]

It's so ironic to get these comments and realize that it's only that one factor that makes a difference.

That's *New Blood:* I'm having a lot of fun with it, I've got the next seven or eight issues already scheduled. Right now, it's bi-monthly, and the bi-monthly issues of *New Blood* interleave with the bi-monthly issues of *Hidden Years*.

WIZARD: That gives you a title on the stands every month.

RICHARD: That's our starting point. But from this point I, as a co-creator and publisher, have gotten really going, because there's even more that we can do. There are at least a couple of more Elfquest-related titles that have suggested themselves. One of them would be adaptations into comic form of the *Blood of Ten Chiefs* short-story anthology published by Tor Books and edited by me. These are stories about characters from the Wolf Riders' past written by other science-fiction and fantasy authors. They are very good stories, but not necessarily hidebound, canonical stories. If we wanted them canonical, we could tweak them into it. I think a series of those adaptations could do very well.

When I was at the San Diego Comicon, I had a great time talking to writers and artists who were very enthused about working with the Elfquest world. There's so much potential out there that really wants to be explained with caring and attention to detail.

WIZARD: You mentioned non-*Elfquest* related projects...

WENDY: I don't know if *Jink* falls into that category.

Jink is related to *Elfquest*. It's the next series I plan to be doing, starting this year. *Jink* takes place on the world of two moons—where the *Elfquest* stories have always taken place—but thousands and thousands and thousands of years into the future, in a highly technologically developed landscape. It's kind of like Akira meets Barbarella. [laughter]

RICHARD: In partial jest, we've been calling it "Elfquest: The Next Generation."

WENDY: Jink, the lead female character, is a descendant of our elves; therefore, she's immortal, and has been getting by on this world in various ways and in various guises all this time. She survives through ages and generations and retains some of the powers of the elves...which she underplays as much as possible so she won't attract that much attention to herself.

She tends to gravitate to where things are growing; she's a very positive kind of character, but at the same time she's the kind of character who, if you push her a little too far, you better be careful. She has stuff going for her that's very subtly hidden...until she brings it out and uses it.

It's a challenge because, traditionally, action heroines haven't been able to carry their own series very long; we're hoping Jink is going to break some prejudices and some preconceptions about what an action heroine should be. I hope guys can identify with her as easily as women do. It'll be a five-issue, full-color mini-series in 1993.

RICHARD: We are a color comic-book publisher from now on.

WIZARD: Any other projects in the wind?

RICHARD: Well, as I mentioned earlier, this is a very very crazy time in comics. Comics are being discussed in more different quarters than they ever have in my memory.

We have talked about the possibility of *Elfquest* trading cards. A lot of retailers have come up to me and said, "You know, we could sell a ton of these if you'd just do them." We have talked between ourselves about the idea of *Elfquest* storybooks or children's books, that might be sold only through traditional bookstores. Our efforts all have a single goal, a

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single focus—to get *Elfquest* seen, known, understood, accepted, liked by more people.

We've talked about this on convention panels hundreds of times: It doesn't matter how many copies of *Spawn* #1 sell—a million and a half or something? That's not a meaningful number. I'm sure it's meaningful to Todd McFarlane—but it's not meaningful in terms of readership recognition. We're not looking for *Elfquest* to be *Spawn*, or to be *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*, in terms that it's going to sell billions of copies and make hundreds of millions of dollars and be a "hot" item. If we were told right now, by some cosmic power, that *Elfquest* will be regarded in 20 years the way Dr. Suess' books are regarded now, I would go very happily to my grave. Because Dr. Suess is there—it's bedrock, it's part of what kids read.

WENDY: Let me interject some pieces of a couple of conversations Richard and I have had recently. This is all very hot and percolating stuff to us.

We're talking with an agency in Hollywood that is asking us if there's any way to put a little more innocence into *Elfquest*, any way we could aim it at younger children—and open up an entirely new audience for it. Their observation is that there's a certain level of sophistication in *Elfquest* and *Elfquest* has a kind of dark side to it—which I freely admit it does.

Elfquest is sort of about the troubles of alienation and finding your place in the world; being innocent yourself, but being kicked around just because you are who you are.

WIZARD: It's about puberty!

WENDY: Of course—and teenagers can relate to that naturally.

All my characters seem to have a rampant sexuality which teenagers do—but they're still children.

But when we talk about kids now—what about ten-year-olds and younger. Their troubles, their concerns, their awarenesses are different...and Richard and I have never really sat down and talked about that before. We see possibilities for *Elfquest* to be something like, what—Care Bears for older kids? In the sense of helping kids deal with their emotions or certain concerns they might have about relating to their friends and family. Not the kind of heavy, erotic stuff we sometimes deal with.

There are all kinds of different versions of Batman: you have Batman for *SuperFriends*, you have Batman the Dark Knight, you have this incredible, wonderful new cartoon series—all sorts of different spectrums for the character. What we are exploring this year, more intensely than ever before, is—can that same sort of thing be applied to *Elfquest*? Can these characters be aimed at younger kids? It's tricky—you can't get as dark; you have to have a more harmonious world view when aiming at younger kids. When you're writing for younger kids, you have to think about hope, about solutions, rather than just chewing over problems.

Gosh, I sound like a mother.

WIZARD: Wendy, how have the marketing changes and other changes in the comics industry affected things for you as an artist and writer?

WENDY: Emotionally, it's a stressful place to be in. You want to keep up with the times, yet you have a world view, a vision, life experiences to draw on to tell your story. The world is moving at a very fast pace, and what people accept as entertainment now—and the speed with which they will accept input—is on a much faster, much flashier scale than it was when Richard and I started *Elfquest*.

I can't tell *Elfquest* stories nowadays as leisurely and—in most cases—as pointlessly as I used to. It's an entirely different ballgame. People want to be able to look at something and know what it's about the minute they see it. People have to "get" your product the moment they open to the first page—or the moment they look at the cover—or they're going to slide right by. There's so much product out there, you have to literally grab people by the hairs of their chinny-chin-chins and say, "Turn the page."

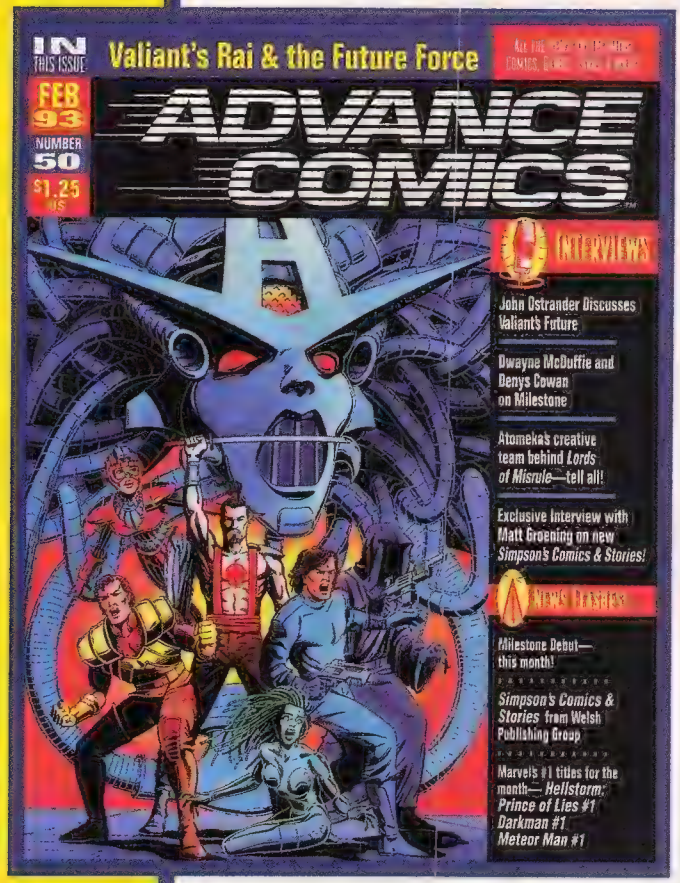
WIZARD: Fascinatingly, however, I look at much of the "hot" material currently, and my first reaction is, "What is that?"

RICHARD: A lot of the talking we do revolves around comics, about what we need to do to have the comics fan "get it." What needs to be on the cover to attract the comics-shop denizen. For nearly 15 years, we have been waging a quiet battle—and we have gained ground—to have *Elfquest* not be pigeonholed just as a comic.

Granted, it comes out as a comic, it's sold in comics shops. The first skirmish in the battle was getting the graphic novels, the color collections, into the mainstream bookstores. We've had a lot of success with that. Our plans for next year all fit into that—the possibilities of children's books, of going into wider media. We're not aiming our future at the comics audience; it's too limited. There are, at most, 500,000 to a million comics buyers in this country; there are 60 million children whose exposure to comics is minimal at best.

If we meet that goal of being "the new Dr. Suess," it will mean we have achieved the ability to tell stories that can be "gotten," understood real fast, real easily, and that affect the reader at a primary level. ☆

Anything Else Is Incomplete



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Continuity Comics... POISED TO CONTINUE!

By Rob Samsel

Continuity Comics has had a history of trouble maintaining an established schedule of publication, hardly living up to their chosen name. After analyzing their position in the marketplace, Continuity decided to cease publishing comics over the summer. During this hiatus, Continuity ascertained that the marketplace was undergoing rapid changes, mainly in the area of marketing. While never ceasing to continue the creative operation, Continuity sought out and obtained the type of financial backing needed to remain competitive in today's highly aggressive comic book market. Now with an advertising and marketing budget as well as a good deal of finished material in place, Continuity appears ready to re-enter the struggle apparent in today's fight for shelf space. Enlisting the aid of Larry Stroman, *Cage*'s Dwayne Turner (who draws a most excellent Hulk, I might add—check out *Cage* #10 for that.), Sal Veluto and Chris Ivy, as well as Continuity mainstays Peter Stone, Richard Bennett and newcomer Aron Weisenfeld, Continuity has a solid creative staff and is raring to go. *Wizard* spoke with Continuity associate publisher Kristine Adams (with some help from writer Peter Stone) about Continuity's re-emergence as a visible, viable publisher, as well as some of the reasons behind their market maneuvers.

She-Bat™ & © 1993 Continuity.

WIZARD: What has been the status of Continuity Comics over the past few months? How come there has been no product available since early summer?

ADAMS: We just stopped our production entirely. In a given month, Continuity usually sells around 30,000 units on each book. Unfortunately only 7,000 of those copies are sold through the direct market sales. Poor sales due to no advertising support is what stopped us from moving forward. Continuity is one of the very few comic companies that is not investor funded. For years, Continuity has been funded by an art studio, Continuity Graphics, based in New York City. For the past four months Continuity has looked for potential investors who would just invest in and not own a piece of Continuity. We've just recently accomplished that goal. It's extremely difficult to find an investor who will put up $500,000 and won't want, say, a 50 percent stake in the company. Creatively, we've been moving ahead on producing a cross-over that would help re-introduce old Continuity fans and introduce new fans into the Continuity line of comics. In March, we will start the *Deathwatch 2000 Prelude,* which will incorporate six of our titles, *Armor, Megalith, Cyberrad, Ms. Mystic,* and two new titles, *Hybrid* and *Earth-4.*

WIZARD: Will Continuity be re-introducing any of their older books?

ADAMS: *Crazyman* will start again in June. All the remaining titles will be left alone for awhile. If *Toyboy* does come back, it will be as a digest-sized book geared for the newsstand. The *Deathwatch 2000 Prelude* and crossover will be direct sales only (no newsstand editions).

WIZARD: Is that part of the effort to push direct market sales?

ADAMS: Yes, we're gearing more towards the direct market.

WIZARD: In the future, will the focus of Continuity be story driven or art driven, and will you concentrate

on today's biggest marketing tool, gimmicks?

ADAMS: Continuity is different from most companies, in that we were known primarily as an art-driven company. When we used gimmicks, it wasn't just an added thing slapped on the cover, but something to enhance the idea of the cover. That's one of the reasons I feel *Cyberrad* #5 is still the best glow-in-the-dark cover ever. Sure there have been some good ones, but stand in a pitch black room with *Cyberrad* #5, *Ghost Rider* #15, *Sandman Special* and *Spectre* #1. It's no contest. As far as gimmicks go, in the first week of December, *Cyberrad* #1, Volume 2 will ship, featuring the hologram cover. The hologram itself will be unlike the solicited version randomly inserted in previews. It will be part of the cover as a mirror, and will be 3"x4", not 2"x3" as previously seen. As far as other future marketing tools, there will be gimmick covers for the prelude and crossover, as well as a very aggressive incentive program.

WIZARD: Will the incentive program offer premium comics for availability by mail-in offer, or a quantity per title ordered basis, like *Unity* #0 and #1?

ADAMS: Neal [Adams, Continuity Comics founder] is doing *Valeria, the She-Bat,* which is the first superhero comic Neal has penciled and inked since *Muhammad Ali vs. Superman.* I think for the people who enjoy Neal's more dynamic super-hero stuff, *She-Bat* will definitely fill the bill. The way you will be able to get *She-Bat* is that a store will have to order a total of 30 comics to get one *She-Bat.* (Six individual titles, times five copies of each, gets you one *She-Bat.*) There's two issues of *She-Bat,* because the cross-over is two months long. There will also be trading cards poly-wrapped into the entire comic line, with one of the chase cards being She-Bat.

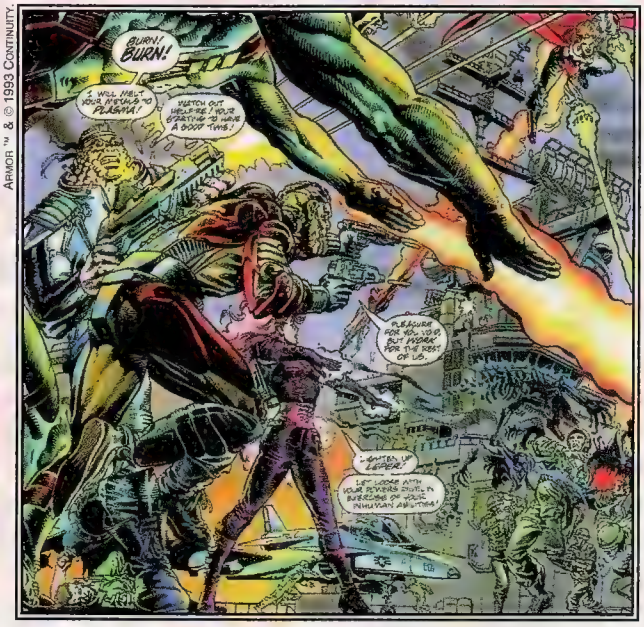
WIZARD: Any chance at all that *She-Bat* will emerge as a regular comic series?

ADAMS: She-Bat is actually part of the Hybrid/Werebreed characters, so she'll be part of the *Hybrid* comic.

WIZARD: Anything you'd like to mention about the creative teams on the upcoming prelude and crossover?

ADAMS: One of the big lessons Continuity has learned is that Neal has spent an awful lot of time analyzing and correcting artwork to maintain a continuity to each particular character's looks. Meaning you'll find stray heads and body parts inked by Neal. How that hurt is that it never allowed us, due to time restraints, to have him produce a full comic. Neal won't be doing this anymore.

Continuity works with artists on strictly a freelance basis. Larry Stroman will be penciling *Hybrid.* Dwayne Turner is doing *Ms. Mystic*—I think one of the prettiest *Ms. Mystic*'s ever. A new guy by the name of Aron Weisenfeld will be penciling *Earth-4.* He's a new guy and he's really hot. Neal thinks he's going to be the next Jim Lee. Richard Bennett will be working entirely on his own on *Cyberrad,* without Neal's help.



ARMOR ™ & © 1993 CONTINUITY

WIZARD: Who will be the inkers?

ADAMS: Aron is working on inking his own stuff. Dwayne doesn't have the time, so we're talking right now to Chris Ivy. Richard inks his own stuff. Larry doesn't want to ink his pencils, but right now we're not sure who will.

WIZARD: Who will be doing the art on the prelude?

ADAMS: Dwayne will be doing the prelude of *Ms. Mystic,* and Malcolm Davis will be doing the *Hybrid* prelude, followed by Stroman on the crossover series. Sal Veluto will do the *Armor* prelude, and Neal Adams will do *She-Bat.* Peter Stone is writing the entire prelude and cross-over. Pete may actually be beating Fabian Nicieza at being the hardest working man in comics.

WIZARD: Pete, anything you'd like to add about the past or future of Continuity?

PETER STONE: Basically what we're trying to do is concentrate on the books more than ever before, to try and create a cohesive universe, and I'd like to think I'm trying to put as much story to it as possible. Whereas in the past Continuity was know as an art-driven company, I'd like to think the story and art will blend well together.

ADAMS: We'd like to think that Continuity's work lends itself well to a mass audience, versus say Valiant, which I fell is directed toward a more adult audience. While Valiant is the first company I've ever heard of that is referred to as story-driven, I don't feel their stories are geared towards a young X-Men audience. I believe you'll see Continuity's stories definitely stand on their own, meshing well with our already solid artwork.

WIZARD: You mentioned in our earlier phone conversation that you have a new marketing budget in place. Is there, say, a three- or six-month period you have to get things going before investors stop spending? In other words, what is, if you do have one, the set agenda?

ADAMS: We have earmarked $40,000 for marketing *Deathwatch 2000.* I'm really proud and excited about the creative teams behind Continuity's re-launch. I'd have to admit that I'd be really shocked if fans don't find and enjoy our new comics. In regards to an agenda, we may have chopped off the books early this summer, but we never quit the creative end of Continuity. We have a large body of finished material which will follow *Deathwatch 2000.* The next five years, the comic market should be very interesting. Over the years, Continuity has learned a lot, like about the newsstand distribution game, and we've taken a lot of blows but managed to survive. Hopefully, in the future, Continuity won't just survive, but thrive in the comic marketplace. ☆

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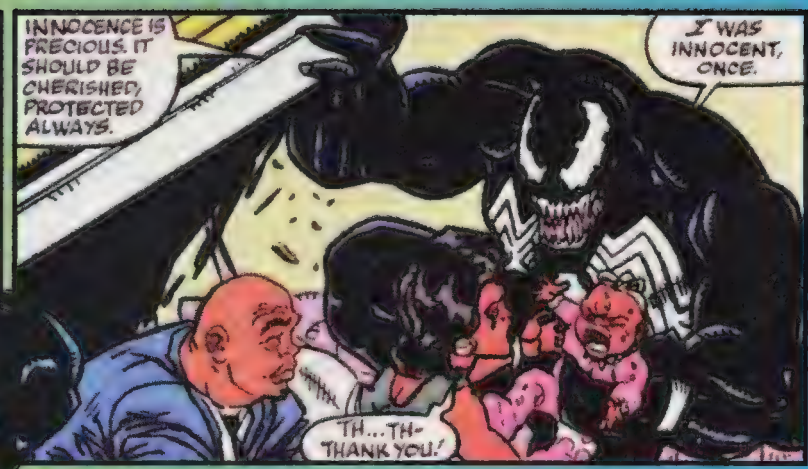

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DRIPPING WITH Venom

How else to describe the new six-issue mini-series starring Spider-Man's erstwhile slathering opponent?

By Patrick Daniel O'Neill

Believe it or not, the "psychopathic murderer" who wears Spider-Man's alien black costume is going straight. Well, sort of. Venom has moved to San Francisco and become the self-appointed protector of a reclusive band of homeless street people.

That's the premise behind the forthcoming *Venom* mini-series, written by David Michelinie, with art by Mark Bagley. But how do you turn

the slavering, tooth-filled killer into a protagonist, a character readers can identify with and cheer for?

Michelinie explains it by describing the mind set that, until now, has made Venom a villain. "The way Venom has been set up from the start is with a very pure primary motivation: he wanted nothing else in the world but to kill Spider-Man; which sounds like an old cliché motivation that every villain has," he says. "However, if you think about it, most villains don't really have an interest in killing Spider-Man. Dr. Octopus doesn't want to kill Spider-Man; he wants to commit a crime. Spider-Man gets in the way, he has to take care of Spider-Man. Venom doesn't care about crime, he doesn't want to rule the world, he just wants to kill Spider-Man. That's a very pure motivation to make him a bad guy.

"His secondary motivation has always been this feeling that Spider-Man ruined him, destroyed him; he was an innocent and for no reason he can ascertain, Spider-Man just came along and destroyed his life. That's Eddie Brock's motivation," Michelinie continues. "The alien symbiote felt the same way—it was innocent and Spider-Man rejected it. So Venom has this twisted sense of protecting innocents. Now, he's crazy—so if he has to kill 20 innocent people to get to Spider-Man, he will do so. But he'll blame Spider-Man: 'See what you made me do—that just proves that you're evil!'"

The trick now, according to Michelinie, is to resolve the primary motivation and leave only the protection of innocents as the core...a trick he pulls off in *Amazing Spider-Man* #374 and 375, the prelude to the six-issue Venom solo run.

"We start by bringing Eddie Brock's ex-wife into the story. She's been a part of his life, a part of the bible I came up with for the character, all along—though I'm not sure she's ever actually been mentioned before," Michelinie notes. "At the end of the second part of the story, she's in danger; Eddie, having fought with Spider-Man, is too weak to save her; Spider-Man, who could get away from Venom and save his own life, chooses instead to help Venom save the ex-wife. Through that act, Eddie Brock sees something that has been there all along, but he has refused to see through his insanity—that Spider-Man also protects innocent people, saves them. Eddie realizes that if he kills Spider-Man that all the innocent people Spider-Man might save in the future would die. They come to an uneasy truce as Venom agrees not to come after Spider-man if Spider-Man doesn't come after him. That resolves the primary motivation and allows the secondary motivation—protecting the innocent—to come to the fore.

"He's still a psychotic; but he's a psychotic protector, now. In fact, the title for the mini-series is 'Lethal Protector,'" Michelinie sums up.

Similarly, penciler Bagley had to find a new way to look at Venom visually, now that he was to become the central focus of a story.

A large part of what sells this character is visual, so you can't play with it too much," he admits. "However, a character changing from a villain to a protagonist can change the way I think about how I draw him. And it should. With Venom, it's difficult because, with that face—especially as exaggerated as it's been drawn recently—you can't show emotion. It's a face of rage. The way I see it it's a fake face; it's a construct. It's a visual representation of this guy's psychosis.

"The idea of taking him and easing the psychosis and bringing him back from that, and still having an interesting face that sells a lot of comic books is something I had to really think about. Venom is now dealing with normal people, he's supposed to be their protector; he can't have this fright mask of a face all the time, but he still has to be Venom. I came up with a way around it.

"When Venom was first created, the way Todd McFarlane drew him, it was just the black Spider-Man mask with a regular smile, regular teeth," Bagley recalls. "The more he was drawn, the more exaggerated it became. Erik Larsen really went bananas with it—basically, I think, because Erik doesn't like the character and decided to just have fun with it. That's not a criticism, that's what he's told me.

"As I thought about it, if the face reflects his emotions, his psychotic state, when he's dealing with people he wants to protect or someone to whom he is not an antagonist, the face automatically—almost unconsciously—remolds itself back into a more normal visage," Bagley suggests. "In the latest issue of *Amazing*

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Spider-Man, I've sort of begun to introduce that element—he deals with a little girl and he pulls back the fangs and the tongue, and the mask turns into a more normal face. That's how I tend to deal with that aspect of it.

"I can't put an 'S' on his chest and make him that sort of a hero; he still has to be the sort of guy who, if he sees a jaywalker and it provokes him enough, he'll kill him. I guess he's a '90s good guy."

As noted, for the mini-series, Venom moves back to San Francisco, where Eddie Brock was born and raised, in an attempt to start a new life there. But he finds it's not that easy.

"He gets to San Francisco and he's kind of lost," writer Michelinie explains. "He doesn't really know what to do; he tries to check into a hotel, but he's recognized—he's still a wanted murderer—and he's hounded and hunted. He has no place to go. He winds up staying in a park, mingling with homeless people."

Michelinie has created a fictional below-ground section of the city by the bay, similar to the real-life "Old Seattle" used to good effect in the pages of *Green Arrow* a few years back. "It's basically a chink of the city that was buried and built over in the earthquake of 1906. These homeless people have discovered it after all these years and built a society sort of like the *Beauty and the Beast* TV series—this society of outcasts, underground.

"Venom, after saving some of these people from an antagonist, discovers their world, but he's rejected from that world. He wants to be a part of it, so he sets about checking out the people who attacked the homeless and finds this plan that involves mass murder and millions of dollars in gold that's been hidden for decades. Through that, he saves these people's lives and is, in the end, welcomed—reluctantly on the part of some of them—and he becomes their protector. From this base, in the future, he will operate; these people become his eyes and ears and when he hears something that will defile the innocent, he'll sally forth to protect them."

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Venom thus becomes the latest in a line of not altogether likable or respectable characters to become the lead in his own book...a line that includes the Punisher and Lobo, among others. Is Michelinie bothered by the idea of turning a successful villain into a somewhat questionable hero?

"Yeah, it bothers me that I've had to sort of destroy a really good villain for this mini-series," he replies. "But I'm not in control. In a way, it's like being a Nazi—If I didn't push the button, someone else would have.' In this case, Venom will be used by other people; he already is being written by other people. He is going to be in his own series of mini-series no matter what I do. For the first few years the character sort of grew organically in the stories—we'd do a story whenever I had an idea that I though would be an interesting development, an interesting progression, of the Eddie Brock/alien symbiote combination and how it would affect Spider-Man. Now the character has become kind of a monster (to coin a term); he's become so

popular that he is now being used by other writers in other books. I have nothing to say over how the character is used in those books. And now, it's going to be a series of mini-series—unless nobody buys them, which fortunately or unfortunately isn't very likely. Therefore, I agreed to do the first story arc, so at least I could have a hand in keeping the character as true as I could within the circumstances required.

"It doesn't really bother me that Venom is such a hit," he continues. "It would bother me more that Carnage seems to be such a popular character. Carnage has no socially redeeming values; he's just a serial killer who likes what he's doing. Venom has a part of him that is 'nobility askew.' He feels within his soul that he is right, he is doing right. He feels compassion, he'll save a baby if it's about to drown. He's a victim really of circumstance and his own upbringing. You can pity him, you can feel for him. Anyone who feels for Carnage is sick," he laughs.

But Michelinie is thoughtful enough not to leave it there. He has definite ideas about why these kinds of characters are so popular. "I've thought back to when I was a kid and what we liked...and it seemed that so much of what teenagers have liked all along is stuff that makes adults cringe," he points out. "I think what they like about Venom and Punisher and Ghost Rider is that fact they don't take any crap. When you're a kid, a teenager, living with you parents, with so many other people more powerful than you, you like to believe there are people who can fight back. A Chuck Norris or a Steven Seagal—they're in the same ballpark. Someone hurts them, they hurt them back. They can take care of themselves. So many people, even adults, have trouble coping with situations they can't control—I think that's what appeals to the readers with characters like Venom and Punisher, who are extreme. In a way, I guess, Carnage is the same way—he's not controlled. You can't take away his car, you can't make him go to his room, or take away his allowance.

"I don't think people are going to go out and emulate Venom or Carnage; I think they can get a sense of satisfaction, of 'Yeah, I wish I could be like that.' I think the jury's still out on Carnage. I just hope people will understand that he's a real sick puppy. As long as they can make that distinction and still enjoy the story, I don't worry about it."

Best Licks '93

Seeing as how popular Venom is, we decided to scour the world and come up with a couple of other "extra-appendaged" superstars. The result? Well, if nothing else, it's one of the few places you'll ever see Odie and Gene Simmons together.

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PHOTO: BERNARD VIDAL

So, who has the best tongue? That being one of the most loaded questions we've ever posed, we'll say Odie, if for nothing else to brown-nose a little to Jim Davis after that butt-sniffing crack. (Bad choice of words...)

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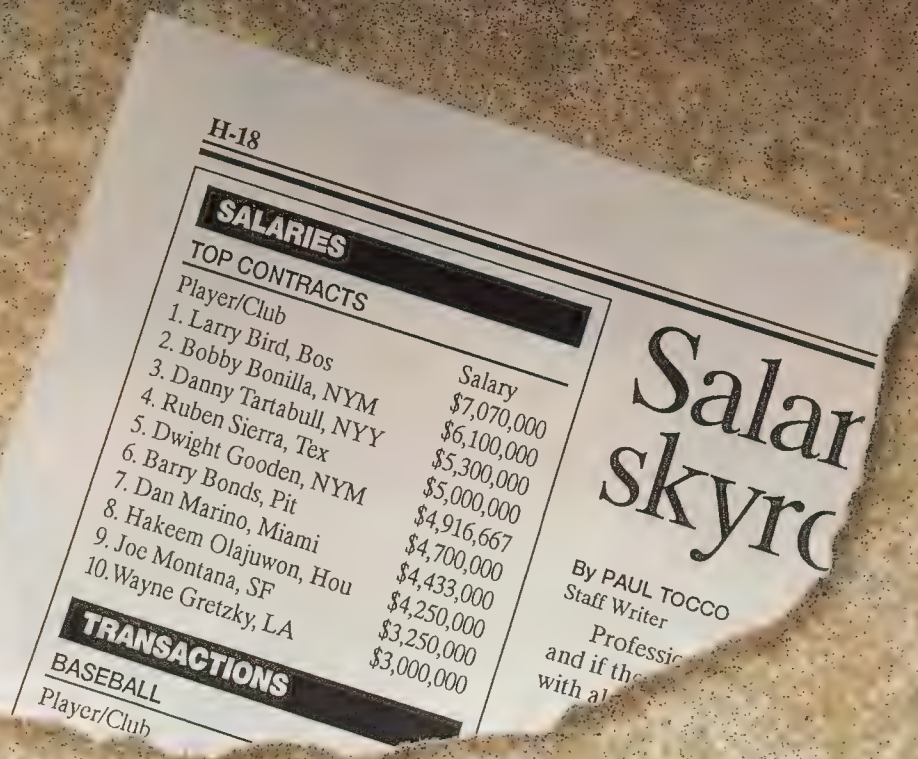
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10) Pass wind in public and blame it on the suit.

9) You can eat all the Doritos (...and Jay Leno too).

8) Kill that new Burger King "B.K.T.V." guy.

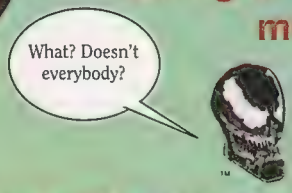
7.) Self-zipping fly.

6) Can slap around French people and no one seems to care (...just like everybody else).

5) Impersonate a rent-a-clown for a children's party; scare the crap out of the kids by eating birthday boy.

4) Never leave wallet in other pants.

3) Get away with walking into pet stores and eating all the mice.



2) Cloak yourself and hang out in Cindy Crawford's dressing room.

1) Enter Olympics, break all athletic records, then eat Bob Costas.

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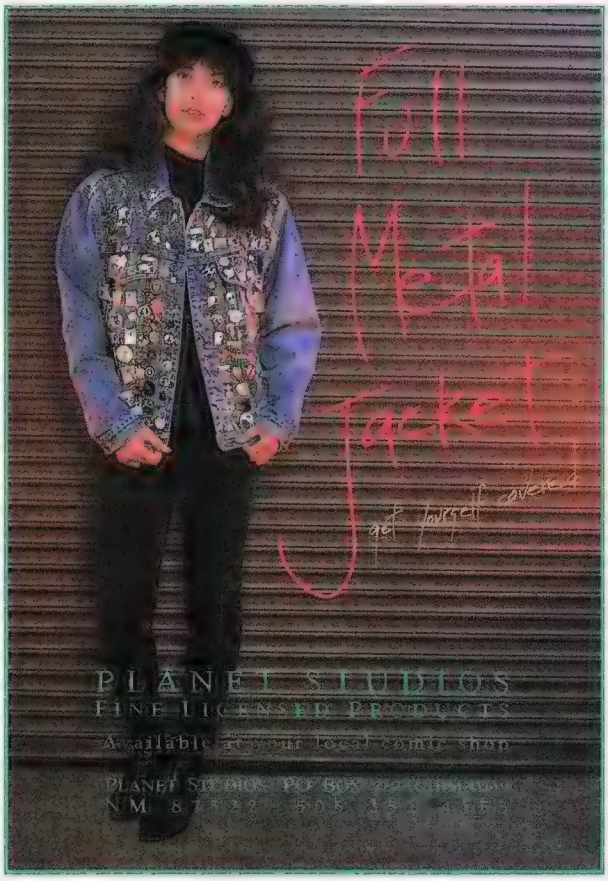

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FROM
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WIZARD'S REALM

BY DORIS SCHWARTZ

Hello from the Wizard's Realm. Before we discuss any new games I want to answer some of the many letters I have received making inquiries about game systems and gaming rules. As I said in an earlier issue, I welcome these questions and will try to answer those that are of general interest here in the column.

For those of you who asked what the most important books to have for *AD&D* are, I advise you to have at least the *Player's Handbook,* a *Dungeon Master's Guide,* a *Tome Of Magic,* along with a few *Monstrous Compendiums.* After that I would think about what areas of specialization I want to get into and start collecting the handbooks for those characters.

Modules are always good for beginning DMs to have. However, most experienced DMs and even some novices really like to create their own scenarios. To assist in the creation of towns, dungeons and forests as well as the creatures to fill them, many fine reference books have been written. We will be reviewing these from time to time, as new books come out. However, many of you are new to role-playing and so I will backtrack and review some of our old favorites in this issue. The first recommendation I have is an excellent series called "Role Aids," published by Mayfair Games. These modules not only have reference materials but some short adventures, and usually an unusual twist to using what was always an NPC as a player character. My favorite book published by them is *Dragons.* This reference work teaches the player the lives, histories and cultures of dragons, and stats for using a dragon as a PC. The book contains a section on dragon anatomy and diseases that not only charms the reader with its magic but will be invaluable to the DM creating any scenario.

I've gotten many letters from readers who have a problem either finding enough gamers to make up a campaign or who can't all get together at the same time. For those of you who are having this difficulty, I will give you a quick overview of three remedies which you might want to use. Again, in a later issue we will be discussing each of these in depth.

1) Split Campaign. We have been playing a split style campaign in the Wizards Game Room. The DM runs one or two players who do happen to be around, in separate "mini" adventures, bringing each of the players to a central large campaign type battle adventure on the one day a week or month we can all get together.

This can be tricky to bring off, as the DM must be very organized. It is not as satisfying as a full-on campaign, but players do seem to prefer playing this way to not at all, or only playing one on one. One caution: players who are into large combat will not be as satisfied as those who are into character development and building of the scenario.

The DM we are using has found it necessary, on occasion, to role-play one or more of the absent players' characters. This should only be done if 1) the DM has the absent player's permission and 2) he really knows the player and character well enough to make minor decisions. At times we have called the absent player for decisions that are to important for the DM playing the character too make on his own. Sometimes we have the active player call one or more absent ones for a joint decision.

2) Computer Bulletin Board System (BBS). Lots of people I know are linking up with other players through a BBS. If you have a computer with a modem this might be an alternative for you. However, play can be rather slow, depending upon who is running the game, how many people are playing, how many phone lines are connected to the BBS etc. Another factor to consider is cost of using the BBS.

3) Play By Mail (PBM). Another alternative to playing around the table with friends is one of the many PBM systems. I have friends who are playing in as many as three PBM games in different genres from sports to board games to RPGs. My only objection to PBM is the length of time between turns. It may take weeks for all the parties involved to respond and then for the GM to analyze their moves and return the results to each player for their next turn.

This just about covers the letters I received that were of interest to the general gamer. Remember this is your column—write in with any questions or suggestions you have on

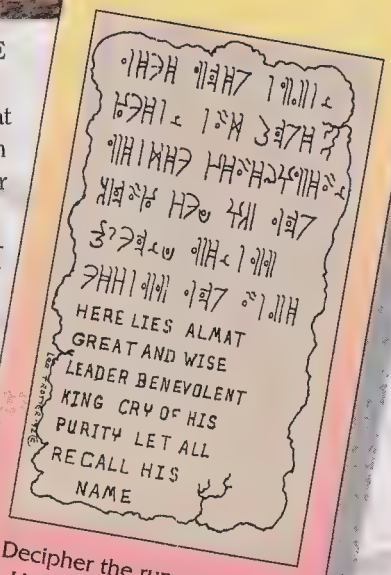
gaming and include a legal size SASE if you want a personal answer.

When new products come out that we enjoy in the Wizard's Game Room I like to share them with you. Mayfair Games has started using a new portfolio format for Role Aids. Each module will come in its own folder full of booklets, maps, illustrations, etc. for both the DM and players to use. The first in this series, *Demons,* has a five-hole-punched section of monsters to be used with *AD&D* that can be placed into your *Monstrous Compendium* binder. The demons are classified by feudal titles, such as Lord, Duke, Arch-Duke and Prince. In addition to a title, each demon is illustrated (size comparison silhouettes appear where necessary) and there are role play hints for each character as well as his sphere of influence, combat and diabolical abilities.

Another unique feature in this module is the 64-page "magic tome" which is designed to resemble an ancient magical libram. Once found by PCs it can be examined by them to discover some of the demons' secrets for themselves. It's a smart looking unit with cover art by fantasy favorite, Larry Elmore.

Today I received my first entries for the contest in *Wizard* #16, and I'm impressed. However, since the contest is not over and we still do not have a name for our Prince, I will refer to him in the next few issues as Hero. Yes boys and girls, and grown-ups of all ages, we will be continuing the adventures of our half-elf Prince and invite you to play along with us.

For the next few issues, our contests will follow the escapades of Hero as his life unfolds. But first, we must correct a few glitches that appeared in issue 16 (gremlins have been known to get into the presses). Here goes: 1) under Central Casting, level 1= raw beginner; 2) The book describes a half-elf as having the vitality of humankind, the beauty and nature of an elf, who are likable folk, but are considered outcasts by some for being different; 3) Hero's bow skill is 3. Now back to our adventure.



Decipher the runes and help Hero regain his lost glory!

Hero has returned to his lost kingdom in search of his great grandfather's tomb. Legend states that within the tomb are two items of great power, with which his family may regain their glory. Each month you will be asked to help him through the perils of the tomb. Your first adventure starts here.

Upon finding a stone tablet praising his ancestor in two languages, Hero draws aside the overgrowth covering the sealed entrance to the tomb. "Aha" he says, "by using the tablet I can translate the message on the door, and thereby solve the puzzle of the door's mechanism. It looks like the center of the amulet is to be turned, but I don't know to which position."

Your task is the same: 1) send in the correct translation to the legend above the amulet on the door; 2) tell us how the face on the amulet is to be positioned.

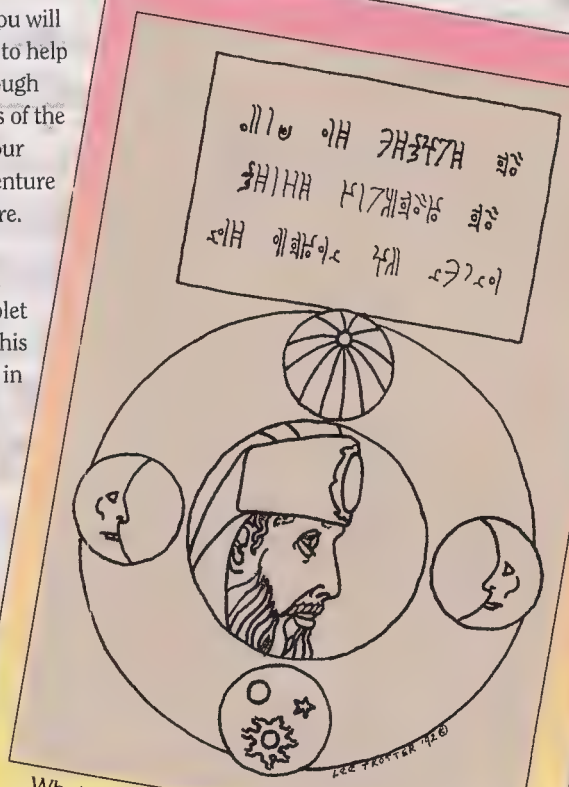
The winner will receive a copy of *Demons* by Mayfair Games and 20 I Love Games Too! character record sheets. Please have entries postmarked by February 15, 1993. The winner of the contest will be chosen by drawing from among the correct answers submitted.

Don't forget the Wizard's Game Room is on the West Coast. Send your entries to: Wizard's Game Room, c/o I Love Games Too!, 111 West Ave. Palizada, San Clemente, CA 92672.

And remember, if you are near San Clemente call us at (714) 498-3895 or better yet, come play with us!

See you next month.

—W—



What does the legend say about the amulet?

Amazing ART

The Showcase Of Future Comic Book Illustrators of America!

Iron Man ™ & © 1993 Marvel Entertainment Group.

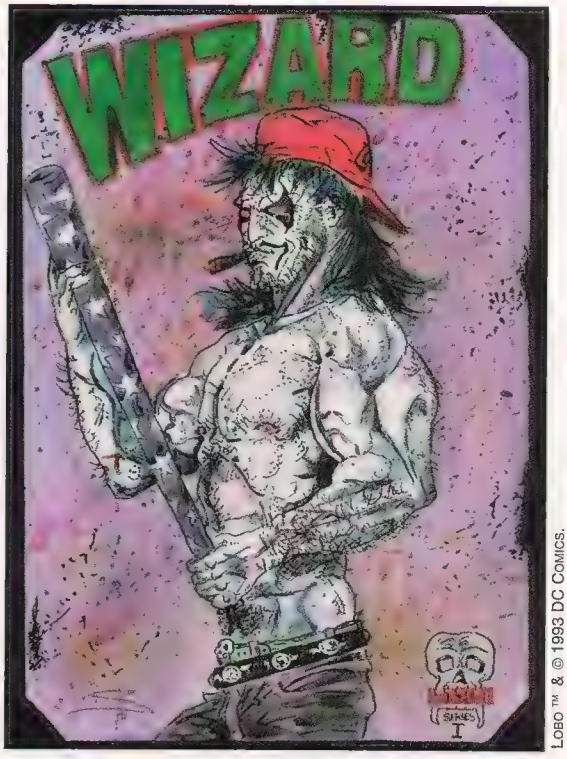
Skip Potratz
Spokane, WA Age: 19

All you need to do to enter Wizard's Amazing Art Contest is send your artwork with your name, address, telephone number and age to:

Amazing Artists
Wizard Press
P.O. Box 648
Nanuet, NY 10954-0648

Submissions can be on any form of un-lined paper or posterboard, and can be in any medium (oils, crayon, line art, etc). Neon or metallic inks will not print. Artwork must not be larger than 8" x 11 1/4". Do not fold, bend or roll artwork--mail them flat to avoid damage. All submissions are non-returnable and become property of Wizard Press. Employees of Valiant Comics are the sole judges of the Gold Eternal Warrior contest, and all decisions are final. Good Luck!

CHECK IT OUT! Every month Valiant Comics chooses from the hundreds of Valiant entries entered into Amazing Art, and awards the best entry a Gold Foil *Eternal Warrior* #1!! If that's not enough, *Wizard* will award a limited edition gold foil *Wizard* trading card to the best entry that features a cool *Wizard* theme. So sharpen those pencils and good luck!

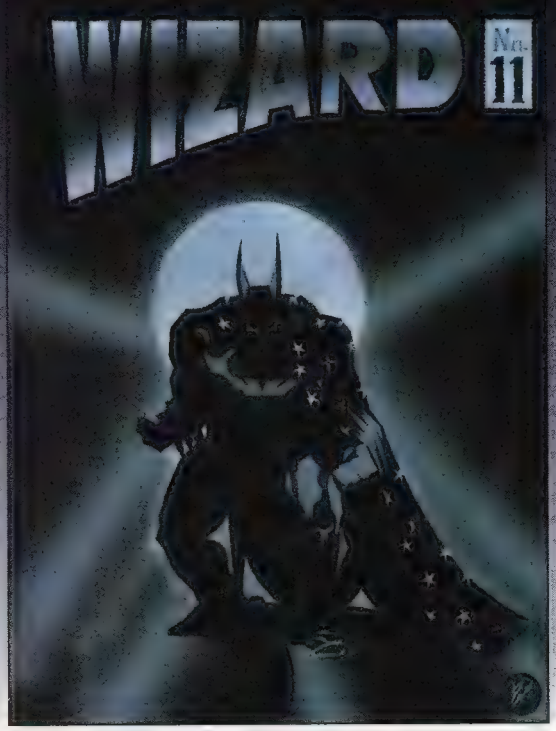


Lobo ™ & © 1993 DC Comics.

Patrick Stacy
Ayer, MA Age: 22

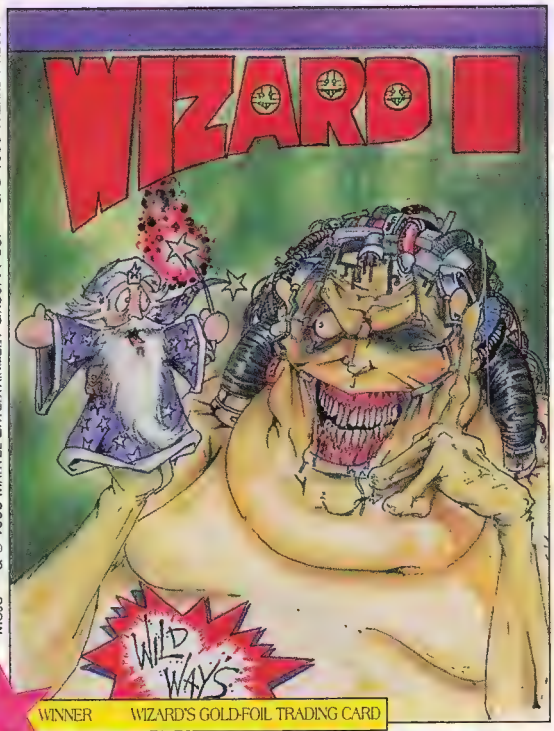
RAI™ & © 1993 VOYAGER COMMUNICATIONS.

Steven Toth
Burnsville, MS Age: 25



BATMAN © & ™ 1993 DC COMICS.

Daniel-Luc Lamontagne
St. Alexandre, Quebec, Canada Age: 28

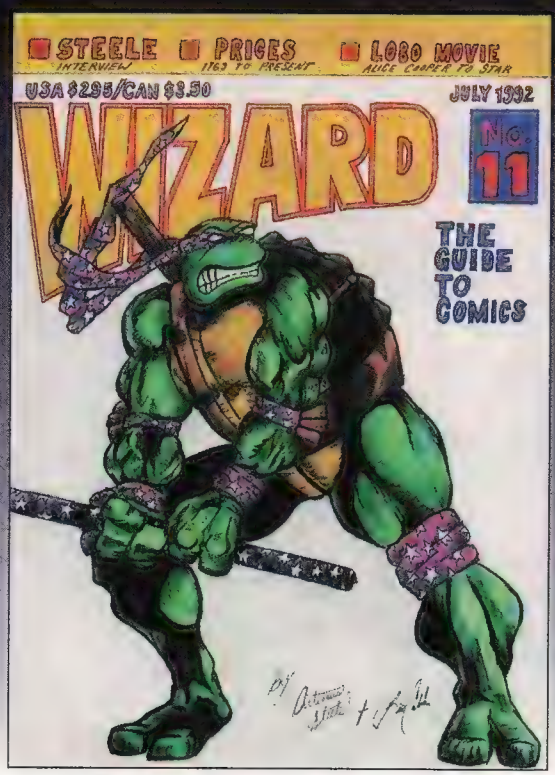


MOJO™ & © 1993 MARVEL ENTERTAINMENT GROUP. POOF™ & © 1993 WIZARD PRESS.

Edward Watson
Redding, CA Age: 22

DR. STRANGE™ & © 1993 MARVEL ENTERTAINMENT GROUP.

Bob Beason
Pocatello, ID

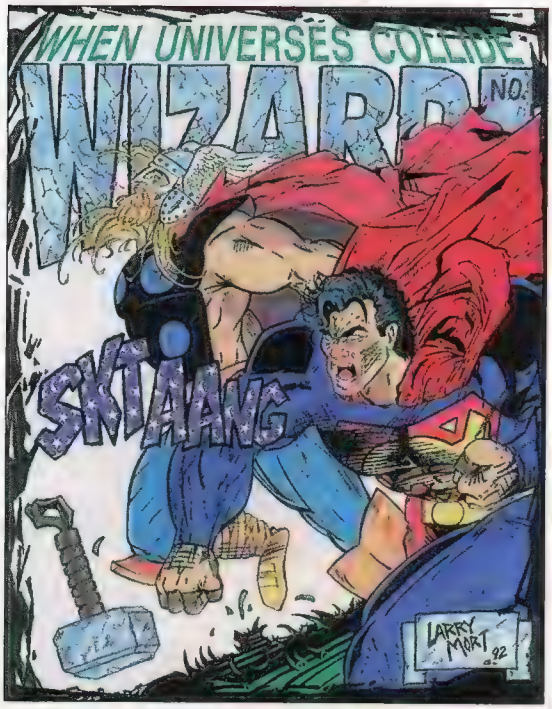


Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles™ & © 1993 Mirage Studios.

Artemus Steele & Bill Cable
Pittsburgh, PA

Incredible Hulk™ & © 1993 Marvel Entertainment Group.

Nathan Simonton
Minco, OK Age: 16



Superman™ & © 1993 DC Comics. Thor™ & © 1993 Marvel Entertainment Group.

Larry Mort
Adelphi, MD Age: 28

Venom™ & © 1993 Marvel Entertainment Group.

Robert Lingwood
Banbury, Oxon, England Age: 31

DAREDEVIL ™ & © 1993 MARVEL ENTERTAINMENT GROUP.

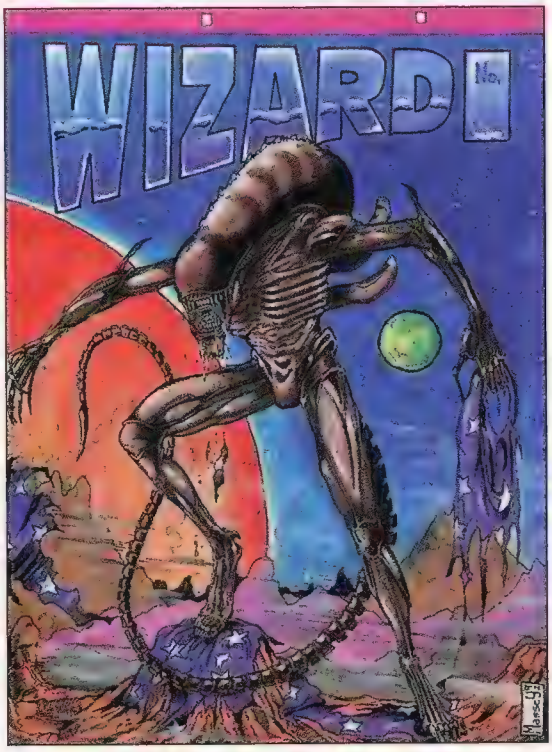
Josh McCleanahan
Canfield, OH

VENOM ™ & © 1993 MARVEL ENTERTAINMENT GROUP.

John DiRito
Lake View Terrace, CA Age: 22

COLOSSUS ™ & © 1993 MARVEL ENTERTAINMENT GROUP.

John S. Forier
Colorado Springs, CO Age: 29



ALIEN ™ & © 1993 20TH CENTURY FOX.

Rick Massey
Terre Haute, IN Age: 27

MY KIND of HERO

MIRAGE

Created by Mike Kitchen (age 17); Milton, Ontario, Canada

Secret Identity: Kevin Johnson
Occupation: Crime fighter
Citizenship: U.S.
Legal Status: Vigilante
Base of Operations: Boston
Age: 24
Height: 5' 11"
Weight: 182 lbs.
Eye Color: Blue
Hair Color: Brown
Powers: Is he a supernatural being with super powers, or is it just an illusion? No one knows for sure (except us). Mirage is an expert at hand-to-hand combat, creating optical illusions, acrobatics, and is a master escape artist.
Origin: Kevin Johnson was only 11 when his father was killed while on duty as a police officer. Kevin decided that day that he would continue in his father's footsteps as a police officer. Learning Jujitsu and the above abilities from his uncle (a stage magician) he became one of the best cops on the force, until he was supposedly killed in an explosion. Kevin then began a new life. Using his skills and his uncle's tricks of the trade, he continues his war on crime as Mirage!

INCINERATOR

Created by Matt Greenia (artwork) & Christine Mencarelli (text), Springfield, MA

Secret Identity: Unknown
Age: Unknown
Citizenship: Home planet Cygnous
Legal Status: Non-criminal
Height: 6' 8"
Weight: approx. 285 lbs.
Eye Color: Unknown
Hair: None
Powers: Incinerator has the power of intense heat penetration and flame throwing ability along with telepathic sensory nerve scanning devices.
Origin: Little is known about the Incinerator's past other than he is from the planet Cygnous. He is a mutant soldier, who once fought alongside the Leech Army during the Great Gravity War of 2406. The Leech Colony was one of many colonies who fought against the "Gravity Kings" for redemption of their gravity rights.

TOYING around • around • around • around

WITH BRIAN CUNNINGHAM

STAR CHEESE

In the wake of *Star Trek*'s twenty-fifth anniversary, I'll wager that you've heard and read all the *Star Trek* stories you'll ever want to know. You've seen all of the films and television shows and you think you've seen everything. I'll bet, though, that you haven't read what I'm about to say throughout the hype— I never liked *Star Trek* that much.

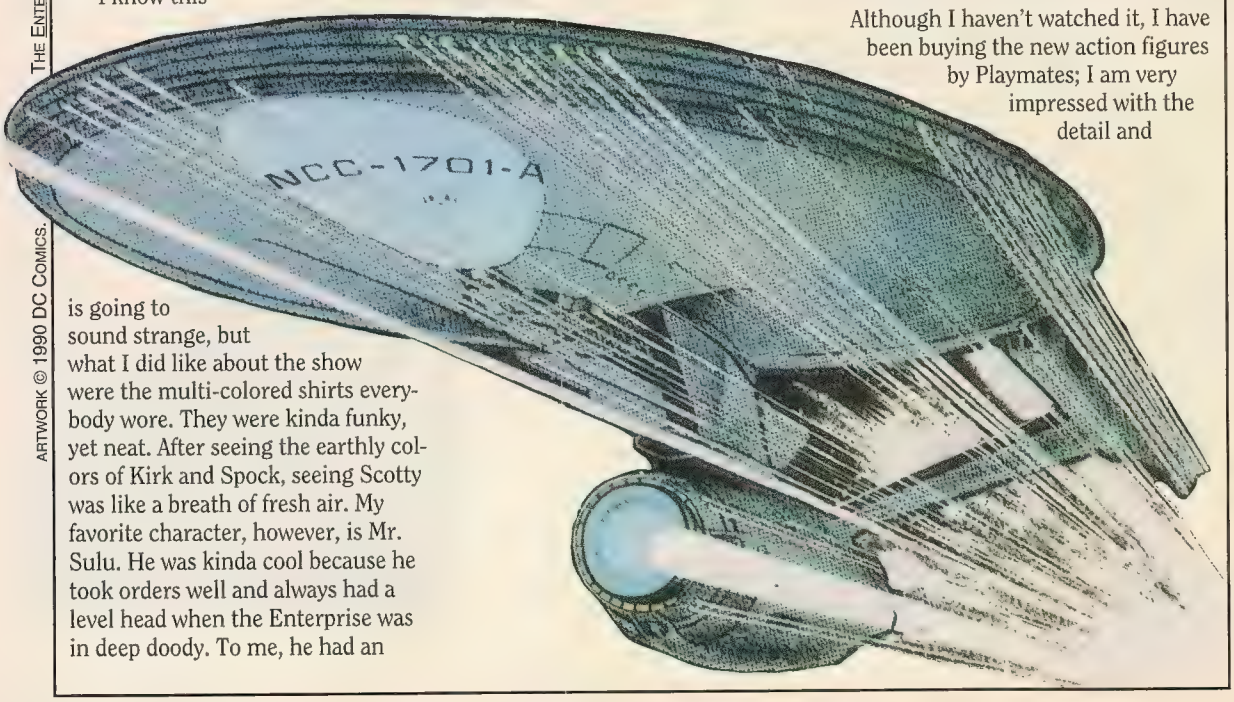
I know, I know. You're thinking, "Blasphemy!! Heretic! This cannot be!" Well, honestly...yes it can. The original *Star Trek* was a television show that caused even my blinded, youthful eyes to see that it was one of the cheesiest shows on television. I hated it. The special (?) effects were awful and some of the stories were boring. I must have seen every episode twice-over and I still can't remember a single one. I just remember not liking it.

I know this is going to sound strange, but what I did like about the show were the multi-colored shirts everybody wore. They were kinda funky, yet neat. After seeing the earthly colors of Kirk and Spock, seeing Scotty was like a breath of fresh air. My favorite character, however, is Mr. Sulu. He was kinda cool because he took orders well and always had a level head when the Enterprise was in deep doody. To me, he had an aura of respect.

What amused me the most about the original show was trying to figure out which background character was going to bite it. For instance, if Kirk, Spock, McCoy, and Lieutenant *Jones* go to inspect a nearby planet, I'll give you three whopping guesses as to who doesn't make it back to the Enterprise. The show had no regard for background characters! Don't get me wrong, I got quite a kick out of the whole thing, but no starving actor could ever expect to have a call-back on their background character with *Star Trek*.

The only time I ever truly enjoyed *Star Trek*, on a whole, was in the movie *Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan*. The story, the action, the suspense was as intense as any film I had ever seen, and at the end of the film... I was a *Star Trek* fan. Then came *Star Trek III: The Search for Spock*, and I disowned *Star Trek* effective immediately. Then, the funny fourth film was released, and I said, "I'm back!" Just as I was getting comfortable, V and VI came along and I sank into despair again...

I must confess that I haven't given *Star Trek: The Next Generation* its fair shake. I remember seeing the pilot episode and not liking it. That's as far as I went with it. Although I haven't watched it, I have been buying the new action figures by Playmates; I am very impressed with the detail and



THE ENTERPRISE™ & © 1993 PARAMOUNT PICTURES
ARTWORK © 1990 DC COMICS.

craftsmanship. They'll look good on my mantle.

While I am not a *Star Trek* fan, I'm kinda looking forward to *Star Trek VII*. I hope in this one Kirk really dies and that it will truly be the "last one." Let's finally see some finality in the movies these days! Let's end the thing once and for all!

Or at least until *"Star Trek VIII: Sulu's Solo Adventure"*...

THEM RARE BORGS

From what many have told me, the Borg figure of the new Playmates *ST:TNG* collection is the rarest in the entire set. Also, from what I have seen so far, the Toy Biz Annihilus figure is also tough to get in the greater New York area as of early November. Other areas around the country indicate that he isn't that rare. Maybe we here in New York will start seeing more of him later on this year.

Kenner, in the meantime, is reissuing the Shadow Wing Batman and Sky Winch Batman in its Batman Returns line. What's new in the line are Firebolt Batman and Rocket Blast Batman which have built-in sound effects features.

NEW BATMAN TOYS

Also from Kenner are the long awaited *Batman: The Animated Series* figures. Included are two versions of Batman. One, called Combat Belt Batman, looks like the Batman on the show, while the other, wearing a much darker suit, is called Turbo Jet Batman. You can expect a new Robin, the Riddler, Two-Face, and a Danny DeVito-ish Penguin. All of them are exact likenesses of the characters on the television show and they look marvelous.

PALMER'S PLUG

I know this isn't exactly toy news, but I want to plug Palmer's Picks, which you can find in this very issue. I decided to try some of his non-mainstream comics recommendations and I have really enjoyed most of them. If not for him, I wouldn't have picked them up. Give it a try, because I know you won't be disappointed! (Thanks, Tom!)

READER MAIL

First off, I would just like to thank everybody who has sent me a homemade figure. I love every single one of them! Be proud that all of them are on my mantle standing tall for all to see! You all flatter me beyond words, and I mean it. Thanks again!

I would also like to extend gratitude to all who have sent me loads of information on the Boba Fett conundrum. I would like to present to you next issue the verdict from what I could gather.

Now, on to the mail...

Hans Wittrock of Utica, MI asks a few questions: 1) In what states can I find Max Schreck? 2) Do you know who has the rights to make X-Men figures based on the cartoon? 3) Do you know for a fact if Kenner is making figures based on the Batman cartoon? 4) Who has a license to make DC superhero figures?

1) As I reported two issues back, there is no Max Schreck figure. I apologize for passing this false information on to you, Hans. I'll never trust that source again! 2) As far as I'm aware, Toy Biz is only making one set of X-Men figures and they're the ones you probably already have. 3) Yes, and now, so do you. 4) Your guess is as good as mine. Kenner, as you could already decipher, has a limited license for Batman. If you keep your fingers crossed, maybe Kenner will do more DC characters. (That's a hint, Kenner!)

Hope you'll all take a gander at the new and improved price guide. Lemme know whatcha think, and thanks for reading.

NEXT ISSUE

Join me as I reminisce about my favorite toys of all time when I talk about "The Toys of the '70s." Be there.

BRIAN CUNNINGHAM'S OPINIONS ON STAR TREK DO NOT REFLECT THE OPINIONS OF THE REST OF THE WIZARD STAFF. (WE *LIKE* STAR TREK.)

This Liefeld-esque Warpath used to be a He-Man figure! It was crafted by Kevin Polidano & Adam Sikora of Oshawa, Ontario, Canada.

Ronald E. Hall of Axton, Va. crafted this Darkhawk figure from a Secret Wars-type figure. A fitting figure for a #2 most wanted dude!

The WINNAH! PITT comes to us from Shannon Stroud of Maple Grove, MN. He was made from a Thundercats Monkian body, a Psycho Scum He-Man head, and a lock of Shannon's own hair! Dale Keown couldn't have done it better!

WARPATH & DARKHAWK™ & © 1993 MARVEL ENTERTAINMENT GROUP. PITT™ & © 1993 DALE KEOWN.

WIZARD Contest

Grand Prize:

An autographed set of the entire "Doomsday: The Death of Superman" series.

First Prizes (2):

A full set of the "Death of Superman" storyline, or a set of the "Death of Robin" storyline (*Batman* #426-429)! *YOUR CHOICE!*

Second Prizes (4):

A copy of the *Death of Captain Marvel* graphic novel, or a set of "The Dark Phoenix Saga" (*Uncanny X-Men* #134-137) featuring the death of Phoenix! *YOUR CHOICE!*

Third Prizes (8):

A copy of *Crisis on Infinite Earths* #7 (featuring the death of Supergirl) or a copy of *Crisis on Infinite Earths* #8 (featuring the death of the Flash)! *YOUR CHOICE!*

Congratulations

to the winners of *Wizard* #15's *Magnus: Robot Fighter* contest (answer—HARDCORPS):

Grand Prize:

David C. McSwain, Jr. (age 22) - Shelby, NC

First Prize:

Chris Anderson (age 18) - San Antonio, TX
Paul Kennedy (age 14) - Sacramento, CA
Ofir Ventura (age 13) - Las Vegas, NV

Second Prize:

Bernard Berrios (age 15) - Miami, FL (home of the Miami race riots)
Phillip Bracewell - Hollywood, MD (home of the confused starlets)
Michael Folks - Springfield, LA (home of Cobra)
Ty Leutz (age 18) - Traverse City, MI (home of Ty)
Brian Morris (age 36) - Champaign, IL (home of a lot of drunk guys)
Justin Wilson (age 15) - Little Rock, AZ (home of the *other* Clinton)

Third Prize:

Bryan Balkie (age 16) - Margate, FL
James R. Berger (age 13) - Buzzard's Bay, MA
Mario Berrios (age 22) - Miami, FL
Matthew Bruden (age 14) - St. Albans, England
Chris Duncan (age 20) - Douglasvile, GA
Bob Ferrara (age 25) - N. Providence, RI
Micah Hayes (age 12) - Denver, CO
Kevin Ogata (age 11) - Kaneoke, HI
Jeremy Ong (age 13) - San Juan, Metro Manila, Philippines
Chaim Rockoff (age 12) - New York, NY
Jason Songdahl (age 19) - Pawcatuck, CT
Randy Szabadics (age 17) - Plymouth, NH
Mark Woon - Edison, NJ
Mike Yount (age 21) - Catawba, NC
Dan Yu (age 16) - Edison, NJ

№18

1. Dead fat guy from Gilligan's Island:
2. Marvel's Roy Orbison look-alike:
3. Spock's dad:
4. The Tamer:
5. Buddy Baker:
6. Wildstar:
7. The master of sound:

Enter Now To Win!

Official 1993 WIZARD Contest #18

YES, enter me in the 1993 Wizard "Morbid" contest for a chance to win an autographed "Doomsday: Death of Superman" set!

Name (please print clearly) Age

Phone #

Home Address

City State Zip

Store Name

Address

Entry Form

1st Prize Choice
check one:
- ☐ Death of Supes
- ☐ Death of Robin

2nd Prize Choice
check one:
- ☐ Death of Capt. Marvel
- ☐ Death of Phoenix

3rd Prize Choice
check one:
- ☐ Death of Supergirl
- ☐ Death of Flash

Morbid Code:

Wizard Clue: Marlon Brando went "boom" here...

Contest Rules

Answer the questions in the boxes supplied. In each answer you will find a circled letter. After you have completed all the questions, the circled letters from the answers, when unscrambled, will form the Contest Code Word. Write this word on the official entry form supplied below or a 3x5 index card.

No purchase necessary. Contest is open to anyone except employees of Wizard Press, their immediate families, and Death.

Print your name, address, city, state, zip code, telephone number with area code, and the name of the store where you purchase your comics, and the Morbid Code on an "Official Entry Form" or a standard postcard. Enter as many times as you like. Mail each entry individually to "Morbid Code #18," P.O. Box 648, Nanuet, NY 10954-0648. No mechanical reproductions will be accepted. All entries become property of Wizard Press and none will be returned. All taxes (federal, state, and local, if any) will be the responsibility of the prize winners. No cash equivalent or substitute prizes are offered. The prizes will be awarded in the name of the prize winners and are not transferable. Only one prize winner per household. Offer void where prohibited, regulated or restricted by law in a manner inconsistent with the purpose and rules hereof.

All entries must be postmarked by February 24, 1993 and received at contest headquarters by February 25, 1993. Wizard Press is not responsible for lost, late, misdirected or mutilated entries.

Odds of winning will be determined by the number of valid entries received prior to the closing date of the contest. The prize winners will be selected in a random drawing from all properly completed entry forms received at contest headquarters. The random drawing will be conducted on February 26, 1993 by Wizard Press. One (1) grand prize- One autographed set of the "Doomsday: The Death of Superman" storyline. Two (2) first One set of the "Death of Superman" series or one set of the "Death In The Family" series (winner's choice). Four (4) second prizes- Marvel Graphic Novel #1 or one set of "The Dark Phoenix Saga" (winner's choice). Eighteen (18) third prizes- one copy of Crisis on Infinite Earths #7 or one copy of Crisis on Infinite Earths #8 (winner's choice).

For a list of winners, which will be available after April 1, 1993, send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to "Morbid #18 Winners," P.O. Box 648, Nanuet, NY 10954-0648.

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COMIC

UNCANNY X-MEN #49

ARTIST: Don Heck & Werner Roth
WRITER: Arnold Drake
PUBLISHER: Marvel
RELEASE DATE: Oct. 1968

© 1968 MARVEL.

Polaris...sounds like the capital of Alaska, don't it? But actually she's one o' them pesky X-people (it's about time those lil' mutants made their way back into the 'Watch). Way back in *Uncanny X-Men* # 49, Polaris made her ominous debut as she was thought to be the daughter of the mighty Magneto. Though she has the same ability to stick to refrigerators he does, she's not quite as omnipotent as the big M. I've always liked Ms. P., but one thing always bugged me about her. Why the hell does she have green hair? I'll admit it makes her look exotic and pretty sexy, but why does she have it? What does it have to do with her mutant power? What? These are comic books and should simply be read and enjoyed, not dissected and analyzed? Okay.

So, you ask, "Why the hell should I bother with this book, Polaris isn't exactly the hottest character around, there's got to be a hotter mutant book around here someplace." Actually, they're getting pretty scarce these days. Most of the key mutant books have been scoffed up, leaving the secondary books sucking wind by the wayside, and way undervalued. If you're still not convinced, this book came out in the late '60s, and finding a mint copy is harder than...oh, finding real chicks with green hair (no fair looking in Times Square). So before it becomes necessary to have your parents mortgage their house so they can get you her first appearance, go out and give it a look-see. Wait too long and it'll be one of those books you ask for, and the store owner will show it to you, pull it back out of your hands and say, "Hey kid, this is a hot book, you got the G's to cover it?"

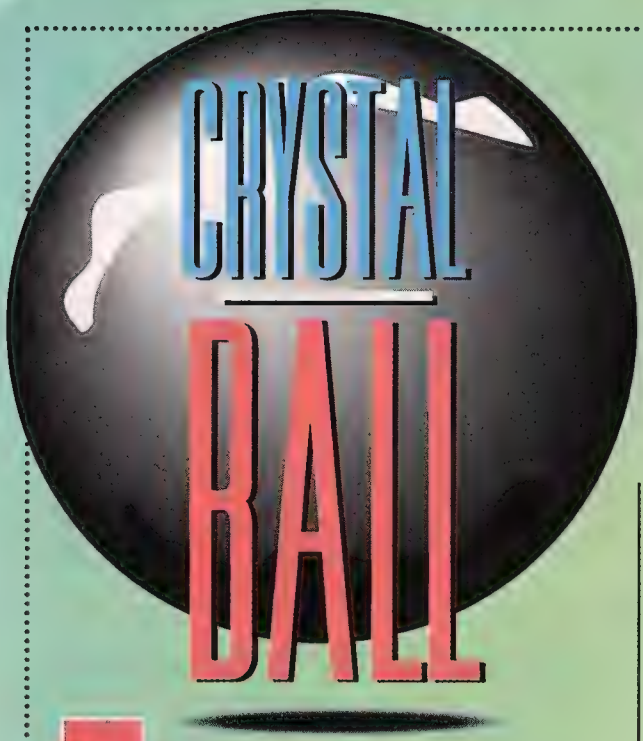
A R D WATCH

UNCANNY X-MEN #54

ARTIST: Don Heck & Werner Roth
WRITER: Arnold Drake
PUBLISHER : Marvel
RELEASE DATE: March 1969

© 1968 MARVEL

What, another X-book in the Comic Watch? Unheard of, but true. We're taking a peek at the first appearance of Havok, one of the cooler X-folks to grace the pages of mighty Marvel's multitude of mutant books. (Whew!) When he was introduced way back in *Uncanny X-Men* #54, Alex Summers (who also happens to be Cyclops' baby brother) was just another unknown. As time marched on he gained the classic black skin tight outfit with the crazy straws on his forhead that we all know so well, as well as becoming one of the most popular background characters in X-Men history. But, if he's nothing more than a background character, why is this book here in the Comic Watch? Well, as those of you who follow *X-Factor* know, Havok has now firmly established himself in the Marvel Universe by heading up that government-sponsored team, and become a major player in the Marvel Universe. So, aside from being an underrated first appearance of a major Marvel mutant, what else does this book have going for it? Hah, glad I asked. This book was published back in the late '60s, when the X-Men really sucked and their print run was but a shadow of what they sell now. Top that off with how few copies of this issue can be found in really high-grade condition, and you have a book that has phenomenal potential that is totally overlooked. Even if it already has a somewhat chunky price tag, expect it to get even chunkier when collectors realize its potential. If you doubt my words, when *Amazing Spider-Man* #101 (first Morbius) was reviewed in these pages (*Wizard* #12), it was listed at an already pricey $48. Take a look at it now. 'Nuff said.



You've no doubt noticed (you do have a complete set of *Wizard* cards, don't you?) the ever-increasing tendency to merge the card and comic fields. Marvel bought Fleer, Liefeld and Lee are doing a subset for this year's Upper Deck high-number football series, and *Wizard*, as always, will be bringing you the cards featuring the very latest characters by the hottest artists bagged with every issue; proving once and for all that comics can be both entertaining and collectable without compromise in either department.

As this trend has developed, comics have gained a whole new audience from people who formerly collected only sports cards. While some people have voiced concern that this influx of card collectors will do the comic industry no good (fearing these collectors won't read what they buy), as we peer into the crystal ball this month we are reminded of the time-worn adage "You can lead a horse to water, but you can't make him drink." Meaning in this case that the hobby benefits from having these new people exposed to comics by any means, no matter how many or few of them end up becoming active comic readers. Comics of quality from all publishers can do nothing but benefit from this.

Speaking of comics of quality, a quick peek into the crystal ball reveals a slew of top-notch publications in the month of January. Here's a look at the cream of the crop.

Death #1 from DC Comics is the book *Sandman* readers have been waiting for. A solo story for Sandman's big sister Death, written by Neil "master of the mystic arts" Gaiman. Accompanying Gaiman on this three-part performance is Chris Bachalo. Bachalo's current pencils on DC's *Shade the Changing Man* show him to be an excellent choice to turn Gaiman's words into pictures. Not only will this series be avidly followed by the legions of Sandman lovers out there, but it will also be an excellent opportunity for newcomers to see what all the fuss over this Gaiman fellow is all about.

Todd McFarlane (who is also no stranger to being fussed over by comic fans) seems determined to keep *Spawn* one of the most well-crafted books in the industry. Hot on the heels of last month's Moore/Miller blockbuster, we have *Spawn* #9 scripted by Neil Gaiman. Gaiman, of course, is currently one of the field's most well respected writers, based on his 40+ issue tenure on *Sandman*. Obviously, McFarlane's no slouch in the penciling department, either, as he keeps showing us issue after issue why he's influenced half the artists working in the field today . Keeping in line with this top notch production is Steve Oliff and crew, whose amazing hues prove issue after issue that computer color is the wave of the future in comics. The only concern we hear voiced about Spawn these days is "what can McFarlane possibly do to top this?" We're sure he'll think of something.

Spawn isn't the only Image title loaded with talent this month. *Darker Image* #1 features the work of Rob Liefeld, Sam Kieth, and Jim Lee; any one of whom can turn the most jaded comic reader into a simpering fanboy all by himself. Putting them all together gives this book fan appeal that many companies' entire lines can't match. *Darker Image* features the debut of three new characters (The Maxx, Deathblow, and Bloodwulf), and each copy will be polybagged with one of three trading cards (one by each of the three creators). Anthology titles have a reputation for not selling well. It seems most readers prefer stability in terms of creators and characters to the wild card that anthologies can sometimes be. Give this one a try, because with the likes of Lee, Liefeld, and Kieth doing it, there's sure to be something you'll like inside.

Honorable mention dept.: The UK printing of the first issue of the mega-popular *Star Wars: Dark Empire* from Dark Horse International will be even cooler than the ones we yanks got, as it will contain the first two cards from an all-new *Star Wars* card set. You can bet that those of us who cut our card-collecting teeth on *Star Wars* cards will be queing up early to get our copies of this one. Also this month, Valiant answers that oft-posed question, "What more do you need in a comic besides dinosaurs?" Try the guy who is currently Valiant's hottest new character, Turok. In *X-O Manowar* #15, X-O and Turok tag-team a herd of dinosaurs intent on rampaging through the twentieth century. Only Valiant could make an arrow-slinging fighter from the distant past popular in an era of readers brought up on the likes of today's high-powered and high-tech heroes. Early Turok appearances are already being sought after in anticipation of the stone-age warrior getting his own series early in 1993, and *X-0* #15 should be no exception.

Finally this month, a few quick picks for *Wizard* readers to watch for: *Wildstar: Sky Zero* #1—Jerry Ordway makes his Image debut; *Amazing Spider-Man* #375—64 pages of Spidey vs. Venom and a holo-grafix cover; *Silver Surfer/Warlock: Resurrection* #1—written and drawn by Marvel's master of cosmic epics, Jim Starlin.

With the deluge of outstanding new projects being offered for the beginning of '93, it's hard to imagine what the summer's traditionally even busier months will have to offer. Keep your eyes on the Crystal Ball to find out.

WILLIAM CHRISTENSEN
MARK SIEFERT

THE WIZARD OF CARDS

BY STEPHEN SHAMUS

Payday: The Death of Superman. At least that's what the retailers who were able to cash in on the Man of Steel's demise were calling it. Not only did the comics involved go crazy, but the trading card set put out by Skybox is also doing phenomenally. These things are hot hot hot and are flying off dealers' shelves everywhere. There were only 8,000 individually numbered and sealed ten-box cases, so with only 80,000 boxes out there, these cards are where it's at. To make this set even more of a collectible, four randomly inserted (really, *really* randomly inserted) "Spectra" cards were inserted and are already fetching between $12-18 each. They're pretty cool and worth checking out, if your local store owner still has 'em. Skybox has officially sold out of this product, so supplies are limited.

The second card line blazing a trail this month is the Marvel Masterpieces set, also by Skybox. There were only 17,500 individually numbered and sealed twenty-box cases (that's 350,000 boxes, boys and girls). The artwork has been reproduced on the highest quality card stock, along with a UV coating and inlaid gold lettering and inner borders. Easily the nicest superhero trading cards ever produced. And of course, there are the chase cards. The five card spectra inserts are a little tough to get complete sets of, but are the nicest cards I've ever seen. They look great and boxes are selling out quickly everywhere. Based on what we've seen with the previous three Marvel Universe sets, as well as the X-Men series, this 100-plus-card set will be gone shortly.

Okay, now back to new product news. Skybox will be printing the first line of comic art trading cards featuring Archie and the Riverdale High gang. It will be a 120-card set and there will be five randomly inserted holograms. The set will feature all your favorite Archie characters, including Coach Kleats, Svenson, Pop Tate and Professor Flutesnoot.

Skybox also will be producing the first ever Garfield card set. America's favorite fat cat will have his own 100-card set. It includes the most famous artwork from the Garfield strips, as well as original art created exclusively for the series by Garfield creator and artist Jim Davis. There will also be five randomly inserted hologram cards, which when placed together, form a larger multi-hologram image.

Pro Sports Specialties will be issuing a 100-card set of the Peanuts gang. There will be only 2,500 individually numbered 16-box cases produced. There is, of course, a "chase" card involved. There will a total of 7,500 randomly inserted "Snoopy Presidential" hologram cards. There will also be chances to win a vacation to Knotts Berry Farm as well as other "Peanuts" gifts.

In other news, although this is a sports issue (rather than a non-sports issue), the first woman professional hockey player now has her very own hockey card. Manon Rheaume (pronounced Ree-oom) is included in the 1992 Classic Hockey Draft Picks set. She is currently in the minor league hockey system playing for the Tampa Bay Lightning as a backup goaltender.

Well, that about wraps things up for this month. See you next month as Wizard of Cards gets a new look and the card price guide explodes with set listings. See you in 30!

Somebody finally kicked Superman's big "S." Check it out in SkyBox's new "Doomsday" set.

From gorgeous ladies to awesome heroes, the Marvel Masterpieces have the juice.

Trading cards in the price guide that are colored red (**like so**) have risen in price since last month's listing, and trading cards that are colored blue (**like so**) have dropped in price since last month's listing.

PICKS FROM THE WIZARD'S HAT

Here's a listing of the hottest books shipping in January!

Darker Image #1

Artist: Kieth, Lee & Liefeld
Writer: Kieth, Lee & Liefeld
Release Date: January
Cover Price: $2.50

As seen on the gatefold cover of *Wizard* #16, *Darker Image* #1 features the combined talents of Image's and comicdom's premier talents, in an anthology-style ongoing color comic. *Darker Image* was created to explore the dark side of the Image Universe. (Dark side, huh? What was the Violator, Tinkerbell?) Sam Kieth's entry into the Image Universe is The Maxx, whose tales are scripted by long-time critical fave William Messner-Loebs. The Maxx, who looks like he's in dire need of a tailor and an orthodontist, is a tough hero who believes he fights great battles with the assistance of his jungle girl helper Julie, and she thinks he's a mentally unbalanced homeless man suffering from delusions of grandeur. This dual perspective, combined with Mr. Kieth's visually captivating artwork, should appeal to all of us. Next on tap is Rob Liefeld's Bloodwulf, a highly paid, galaxy-wide bounty hunter who won't stop short of accomplishing his goals, even if it means destroying an entire planet (Don't this bastich sound fraggin' familiar?). Lastly, we have Jim Lee's Deathblow, a man whose job is simply killing people. When crippled by a terminal illness, he seeks a peaceful ending in a monastery. Of course, the past follows those who kill for a living—you know, karma and the like—so more carnage is right around the corner. What we've seen of Deathblow is unlike anything Jim Lee's done before, but mind-blowing nonetheless. Each copy of *Darker Image* #1 also comes polybagged with one of three trading cards by either Kieth, Liefeld or Lee.

Deathblow™ & © 1993 Jim Lee. Bloodwulf™ & © 1993 Rob Liefeld.

Eternal Warrior #9

Artist: Mark Moretti
Writer: Mark Moretti
Release Date: January
Cover Price: $2.25

The Geomancers. As introduced to us readers through the pages of the now legendary *Unity* crossover, Geomancers are the chosen humans with the ability to tap into the energy of the Earth's life force, a very handy trait to have. The power of the Geomancers is passed on from one person to the next chosen one, starting at the beginning of time. Centuries ago, one particular Geomancer found himself unable to pass the knowledge down to the next chosen one. So instead of letting the Geomancer legend die, he took it upon himself to transfer the knowledge into a book. Gilad, the Eternal Warrior, took it upon himself to take the book and watch it until he could pass the knowledge down to the rightful Geomancer. Upon letting the Geomancer gather the knowledge, Gilad took back possession of the book. Now, centuries later, the book has fallen out of Gilad's hands and into the hands of the tattoo-headed bald dude—Master Darque. Now it's up to Gilad and Geoff the Geomancer to take the book back and keep Darque from using the knowledge to further the growth of his evil empire.

Wildstar: Sky Zero #1

Artist: Al Gordon & Jerry Ordway
Writer: Al Gordon & Jerry Ordway
Release Date: January
Cover Price: $2.50

After forging their careers under the banner of DC Comics, long-time savvy vets Al Gordon and Jerry Ordway bring their under-appreciated skills to the over-appreciated Image Universe. *Wildstar: Sky Zero* is a four-issue limited series set to debut in January. The story surrounds a war that is occurring thirty years in the future, but started sometime in the mid/late 1990s. As the war escalated, so did the weapons used by the two warring factions. Now the weapons being used in this battle are parasitic alien symbiotes. These symbiotes surround the host life form and equip them with unique and awesome powers. Wildstar comes to present-day Earth to prevent this war from occurring. Little does he know that he's been stuck in this same 30-year loop for numerous repetitions. In the cycle represented in the book, seven of the evil faction's soldiers follow Wildstar back, vowing to put an end to him and his efforts to prevent the war (interesting concept here, I say). Find out what happens to the closest thing we have to a naked super-hero since Silver Surfer! Not enough to sway the dough out of your comic-buying pocket? Wait until you see the cover, gang!

Eternal Warrior ™ & © 1993 Voyager Communications
Wildstar ™ & © 1993 Jerry Ordway and Al Gordon

Amazing Spider-Man #375

Artist: Mark Bagley
Writer: David Michelinie
Release Date: January 12th
Cover Price: $2.95

Our pal Spidey's 30th Anniversary has been quite a bonanza for fans, new and old, of the ol' Web Slinger. First, we get the four hologram anniversary covers, then secondly, the return of Peter Parker's parents. Then, Venom gets his own limited series. Now here comes Spidey's amazing 375th issue! This particular issue centers around our hero Web-Head, and his well-known and documented relationship with probably the most wildly popular villain in comic history, that slobbering symbiote known as Venom. The relationship between the two long-time enemies gets a further looking into, leading to what has been deemed "a major turning point" in the history of these characters. Long-time *Amazing Spider-Man* (and *H.A.R.D.Corps*) scripter David Michelinie and fan favorite Spidey art team Mark Bagley and Randy Emberlin bring us this titanic tale, so big it takes 64 pages to hold it! To make sure we don't miss this one on the shelf, Marvel is giving us a cover chock full of all the holo-grafix and metallic bells and whistles we can possibly handle!

Death: The High Cost of Living #1

Artist: Chris Bachalo
Writer: Neil Gaiman
Release Date: January 12th
Cover Price: $1.95

DC kicks off its new adult/fantasy-oriented Vertigo line with a nifty little three-part story featuring the Endless Family's favorite character, Death. As we regular readers of *Sandman* know, Death is of course Neil Gaiman's version of the Grim Reaper. But, instead of the pasty-faced guy with the black hood we saw pushing a shopping cart in *Bill & Ted's Bogus Journey,* we get sort of a version of Phoebe Cates in gothic dress (which could go a long way as an explanation of her popularity). Death, as a member of the Endless Family, is immortal. Once every hundred years, for one day, she becomes mortal. In the three-part mini-series, she explores the human lifestyle, a lifestyle of mortality that she is completely inexperienced in, seeing as the only time she ever deals with humans is in their final stages of life. In this century, her examination of mortal life takes place in the playground of "fun" we know as New York City. Geez, doesn't she know that on the one day she's mortal that the big city is the last place she should be?! Will she make it through the day? Tune yourself in to *Death* #1, featuring a metallic cover, to find out.

Spider-Man ™ & © 1993 Marvel Entertainment Group. Death ™ & © 1993 DC Comics.

MORE PICKS

Aliens: Colonial Marines #1
DARK HORSE: Misfit Lt. Joseph Henry and a group of other misfit soldiers guard, of all things, a toxic waste dump. Only this dump is infested with...Aliens! **$2.50**

Animal Man #57
DC/VERTIGO: "Recreation," part 1 of 3. Buddy Baker and his kids are roughed up at a shopping mall by religious nuts. An amusing peek into the family life of Animal Man. $1.75

Archer & Armstrong # 9
VALIANT: Armstrong leads Archer on a tour through history while taking in the sights of the British Isles. $2.50

The Batman Adventures #6
DC COMICS: Robin comes to Bruce Wayne's rescue after he's jailed for murder. Can Robin clear the Batman's name? **$1.25**

Bloodshot #3
VALIANT: The Mob figures out what Bloodshot is, and plans a hit, while Bloodshot must deal with ghosts and his old girlfriend from his former life as he pieces his life together. **$2.25**

Daredevil #314
MARVEL: DD confronts Fear, and continues his relationship with Karen Page. **$1.25**

Deathlok #21
MARVEL: "Cyberwar," part 5 of 5. Deathlok finds his human body but is betrayed. Can even Siege replace a human brain? Go figure. **$1.75**

The Demon
DC COMICS: Lobo guest stars as Etrigan sets out to obliterate his pal Asteroth and his cronies Tweedledee and Tweedledum. How positively scary! **$1.75**

Detective Comics #657
DC COMICS: "The Cypher Configuration," part 1 of 2. Cypher plans to destroy the Wayne organization and Robin and Azrael are the only hope. **$1.25**

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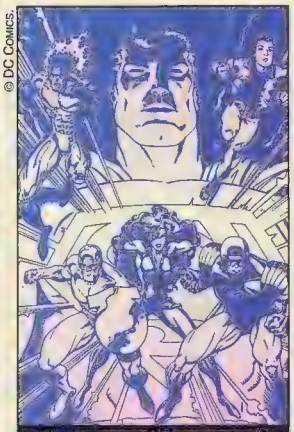


The Legacy of Superman #1

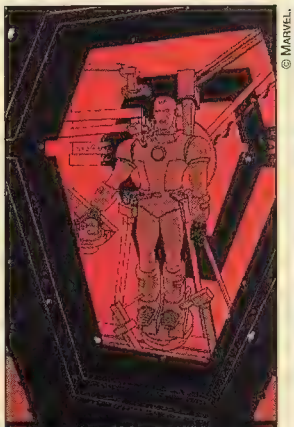
© DC Comics.

Legends of the Dark Knight #43

© Marvel.

Fantastic Four Unlimited #1

© Marvel.



Iron Manual #1

Eclipso #5
DC COMICS: The Eclipso strike force manages to penetrate the fortress of Parador, but can they get out alive?! **$1.25**

Excalibur
MARVEL: Rachel Summers resurfaces as the Phoenix, Capt. Britain rejoins the team, and the Warpies become normal. What more do you need? **$1.75**

Fantastic Four #374
MARVEL: In a Secret Defenders crossover, the new Fantastic Four (Ghost Rider, Hulk, Wolverine, and Spider-man) battle the old Fantastic Four. Plus Doctor Strange and Silver Sable guest star. WOW! **$1.25**

Fantastic Four Unlimited #1
MARVEL: The Fantastic Four and the Black Panther team up to take down the insane villainy of Klaw, the master of sound, in this all-new FF series! **$3.95**

Ghost Rider #35
MARVEL: After his stay in the nether realm, Dan jumps smack into a love triangle with Stacey and a mysterious third woman while GR faces a "Heartattack." **$1.75**

Harbinger #16
VALIANT: Harada sends troops against Ax while Livewire and Stronghold doubt their allegiance. More on the training of Harada's "Eggbreakers," too! **$2.50**

H.A.R.D. Corps #5
VALIANT: The team must stop Bloodshot from destroying a member of the cartel that funds Omen Enterprises, the holding company for H.A.R.D corps. **$2.25**

Incredible Hulk #403
MARVEL: The Hulk faces off against the Red Skull and none other than the Avengers! 'Nuff Said! **$1.25**

Iron Manual #1
MARVEL: See all the specs and mega-details of Iron Man's armor and weapons. You even get personal notes from Tony Stark himself! **$1.75**

MORE PICKS

Morbius #7

Resurrection #1

© MARVEL.

THE LEGACY OF SUPERMAN #1
DC COMICS: Thorn, Gangbuster, Guardian and Sinbad carry the load after the death of Superman. Will Waverider eliminate the event altogether back in time? **$2.50**

LEGENDS OF THE DARK KNIGHT #43
DC COMICS: "Hothouse," part 2 of 2. Is Poison Ivy or Dominique ensorcelling the Batman? The only hope for Batman lies in Ivy's dark past! **$1.75**

MAGNUS: ROBOT FIGHTER #23
VALIANT: Magnus heads for Earth with Izak and, unbeknownst to them, Malevolent! With the Emperor issuing an ultimatum, can the free will robots survive? **$2.25**

MORBIUS #7
MARVEL: Vic Slaughter is hot on Doc Morbius' trail, and finds him at his new job as a hospital hematologist. Where else would you find a vampire? **$1.75**

NEW WARRIORS #33
MARVEL: "Forces of Darkness/Forces of Light," part 2 of 4. Cloak & Dagger, Turbo, and Darkhawk run around in the Darkforce Dimension. **$1.25**

NEXT MEN #11
DARK HORSE: Project Omega jumps the Next Men. The Russkies throw all they have at them, including the truth about their ties with the wacky Russians. **$2.50**

PITT #3
IMAGE: PITT leaves a swath of destruction trying to uncover the mysterious and grisly details behind his death and rebirth. **$1.95**

PUNISHER WAR JOURNAL #52
MARVEL: Frank Castle, unsure where he stands, confronts a group of white supremacists and an old army buddy. Where do his loyalties lie? Find out! **$1.25**

PUNISHER WAR ZONE #13
MARVEL: It's a brainwashed Punisher vs. a town of unwashed serial killers. Watch as Frank slowly gets better, in mind and gun! **$1.75**

RESURRECTION #1
MARVEL: Warlock and the Infinity Watch promise to return Shalla Bal. Only the price remains a mystery, and the Silver Surfer goes to Hell and beyond! **$2.50**

ROBOCOP: PRIME SUSPECT #4
DARK HORSE: After surviving an encounter with a modified ZED-309, Robo is hot on the trail of a murder suspect, but he must defeat a foe more powerful than any he's ever faced! **$2.25**

SANDMAN #47
DC/VERTIGO: Sandman, now under the Vertigo banner, ends his search for Brother Destruction and an Endless reunion ensues! **$1.75**

SECRET DEFENDERS #1
MARVEL: Dr. Strange, Nomad, Wolverine, Spider-Woman and Darkhawk investigate disappearances of NYC's homeless in this all new Defenders title! **$2.75**

SHADOWMAN #12
VALIANT: Master Darque attempts a ceremony that will give him incredible amounts of Darque Power. Can Jack survive until the Shadowman returns? **$2.50**

SHADOW OF THE BAT #10
DC COMICS: A loony Scotsman builds a castle just outside Gotham, and Batman must breech its walls to stop a murder. **$1.75**

SILVER SURFER #78
MARVEL: Morg lives, Terrax has his axe, the Jack of Hearts battles Nebula, and the Surfer's in there somewhere, too! **$1.25**

SOLAR, MAN OF THE ATOM #20
VALIANT: "Dawn Of The Malevolence." The story that sets up the line in Magnus. A derelict ship saps Solar's energy and becomes free will, then heads for Earth. **$2.25**

SPAWN #9
IMAGE: Spawn evades the deadly touch of Angela, who destroyed Spawn 800 years earlier. Now she's ready to destroy the new Spawn! **$1.95**

© DC COMICS.

Sandman #47

Secret Defenders #1

© MARVEL.

MORE PICKS

Spectacular Spider-Man #198
MARVEL: Spidey teams up with Cyclops, Beast, Iceman, and Archangel in an action-filled battle against Professor Power! **$1.25**

Spider-Man #32
MARVEL: The Master of Vengeance is dressing as Spidey and getting the attention of the Punisher, his victims and, of course, Spidey himself! **$1.75**

Spider-Man 2099 #5
MARVEL: Miguel's brother revealed while Spidey takes on the Specialist! **$1.25**

Spirits of Vengeance #8
MARVEL: Ghost Rider and Johnny Blaze take on evil incarnate—Mephisto! GR also seeks out the truth behind his origins. **$1.75**

Superman #77
DC COMICS: "Funeral For A Friend," part 8 of 8. Mongul takes over Supe's fortress while Pa Kent's health problems worsen. No respect for a fallen hero! **$1.25**

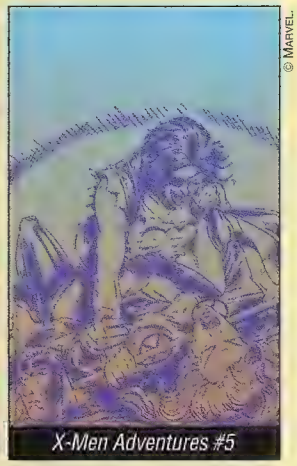
Superman: The Man Of Steel #21
DC COMICS: "Funeral For A Friend," part 7 of 8. Project Cadmus people detect no sign of life but look for what made Superman super. Pa Kent gets weaker. **$1.25**

Supreme #5
IMAGE: Khrome has Supreme at his mercy. Can Star Guard keep Khrome from destroying the fallen hero? **$1.95**

Team Titans #7
DC COMICS: Future problems haunt the team as they struggle to make a go of it in the present. **$1.75**

Uncanny X-Men #298
MARVEL: The X-Men fight to save an innocent mutant from Magneto's evil acolytes, the nasty doers from Claremont & Lee's *X-Men* #1 **$1.25**

Venom #2


X-Men Adventures #5

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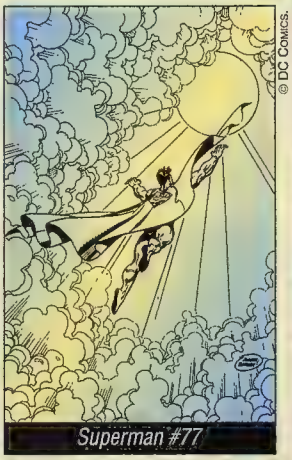
Spider-Man #32


Superman #77

© DC Comics.

Venom #2
MARVEL: In part 2 of 6, Spidey and Venom get it on once again—no explanation needed! **$2.95**

Web of Spider-Man #98
MARVEL: Bloodrose, Foreigner, and Betty Brant guest star in this issue when we'll find out just how faithful Peter is to Mary Jane. **$1.25**

What If...? # 47
MARVEL: What if Magneto took over the U.S.A.? See as the X-Men, Avengers and the Fantastic Four all try to stop you from finding out! **$1.25**

Wolverine #67
MARVEL: Wolverine is nutso and he decides he must kill an innocent man 'cause he's reliving his greatest espionage mission. It's up to the X-Men to stop him! **$1.75**

X-Factor #88
MARVEL: In Genosha, X-Factor and the X-Patriots tough it out against a totally new gengineer. And a little intrigue's a-brewin' at home too. **$1.25**

X-Force #20
MARVEL: The mysteries behind Cable's orbiting space station, Graymalkin, are brought into the light. A must-see for Cable fans! **$1.25**

X-Men #18
MARVEL: The return of Omega Red in the midst of a power struggle between Colonel Varkin and Illyana. Look out! **$1.25**

X-Men Adventures #5
MARVEL: Based on the toon show (even though the books outnumber the shows). The Morlocks capture Cyclops as a love slave for their leader, Callisto. The X-Men attempt a rescue, but can they save the story? **$1.25**

X-O Manowar #15
VALIANT: After being almost bitten in two in Unity by dinosaurs, Aric and Turok extract their vengeance on those creatures in our time! **$2.25**

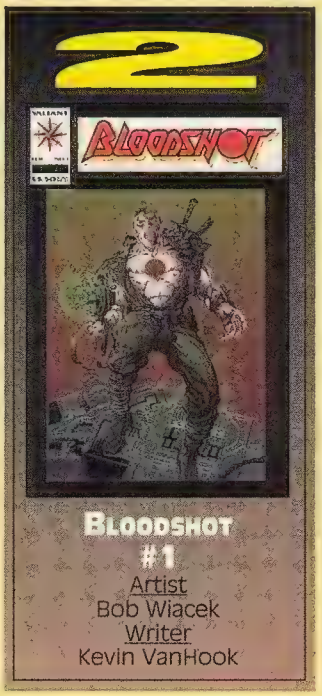
TOP 10 JANUARY - 1993

We keep a very close watch on all the hottest books changing hands throughout the country. Here are the 10 best-selling comics:

© DC Comics.

Superman #75
Artist
Brett Breeding
Writer
Dan Jurgens

Remember back in the good ol' days when the top ten was a nice, safe place? There was one major book that would be "king of the hill," with all the other books just a notch under the #1 issue. It was kind of like when Hulk Hogan was champ. One big monster heavyweight and a bunch of contenders. Weird analogy.Anyway, with Image, Marvel and Valiant pumping out such heavy hitters, the top spot is constantly up for grabs and it's getting harder for an issue to maintain it's hold for any length of time. Case in point: *Superman* #75. There hasn't been a DC book in this chart for over a year, and then Supes kicks the bucket. Not only does DC re-enter the top ten, they conquers it.



© Valiant.

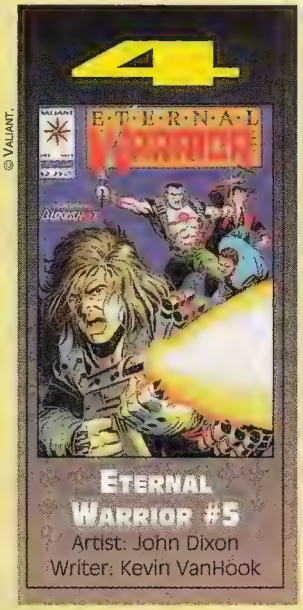
Bloodshot #1
Artist
Bob Wiacek
Writer
Kevin VanHook

With the coolest specialty cover ever to grace a comic book, fans were totally taken aback by how awesome *Bloodshot* #1 was. Valiant tried to let everybody know that this wasn't going to be one of those half-assed gimmick covers that are shipped to stores by the backhoe-load these days. Ads for the book appeared everywhere, they made people aware of the Bloodshot character by sticking him (bad haircut and all) in the pages of *Rai* and *The Eternal Warrior*, and even had a special chromium trading card made of the cover to give to dealers. The result? Though it had the largest print run of any Valiant book ever published, it was still overshadowed by the death of Superman.

© Valiant.

Eternal Warrior #4
Artist: Yvel Guichet
Writer: Kevin VanHook

Aside from being a really cool story starring our bud Gilad-Ani-Pada, it's also the first appearance of the aforementioned Bloodshot dude. Most of Valiant's stuff is geared to a slightly more mature audience, and even though it's really cool stuff, a lot of the Wolverine/Lobo fans don't dig 'em as much. That's where our boy Bloodshot comes in. He's still written with Valiant's flair, but he has just oh-so-much senseless violence that all the young 'uns just eat it up quicker than those new Oatmeal Swirlers things. So you have a book that the older crowd wants because of its well-written and exciting storylines, and the little folk like 'em 'cause of all the blood and stuff.



© Valiant.

Eternal Warrior #5
Artist: John Dixon
Writer: Kevin VanHook

Even more Bloodshot. Though he's a radical departure from the rest of the Valiant superheroes, B.S. shows that fans are getting tired of the rehashed storylines that are the mainstay of most of the other loner vigilante books. Pick up a copy of *Bloodshot* and see that though he may very well have the lamest 'doo since that vampire guy in *Bram Stoker's Dracula*, his stories are really cool. Even though his first appearance was in *Eternal Warrior* #4, it was only one of those lame one-panel things. This issue picks up with Bloodshot and The Eternal Warrior facing off, but they talk it through before slugging it out, unlike certain other companies' books.

© VALIANT.

SHADOWMAN #8
Artist: Yvel Guichet
Writer: Bob Hall

How mean do you have to be to make a clown's head explode? Or poke a guy's eye into his brain? Or beat up on Gareb in the schoolyard and take his lunch money? You'd have to be as nasty as Master Darque, and that's impossible. Even such classic bad guys as Doc Doom and The Joker pale in comparison next to this tattooed dude. Valiant has stated that '93 will be the "year of Master Darque," where he'll pop up all over the Valiant Universe, and his legacy will be felt in the pages of *Magnus: Robot Fighter*. (What the hell do you have to do to have your presence felt 2,000 years in the future?) Anyway, check out his first appearance here in *Shadowman* #8.

© VALIANT.

MAGNUS #12
Artist: Gonzalo Mayo
Writer: Jim Shooter

It is pretty impressive that Valiant took a guy in a skirt, an Indian dude with a bow and wino/Hare Krishna tag team and made them all into such popular characters. Had to get that off my chest. So what the hell is Magnus doing fighting dinosaurs in the year 4001? Well, it all ties in to that Lost Land deal where a small pocket of land exists outside of normal time, where Dinos are happy and plentiful. The big deal behind this one is that it's the first Valiant appearance of Turok: Dinosaur Hunter, soon to be starring in his very own monthly title! When that new Turok book hits the stands sometime in March or April, this book is gonna be extinct availability-wise.

© VALIANT.

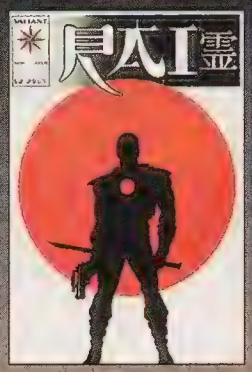
MAGNUS #5
Artist: Paul Creddick
Writer: Jim Shooter

Before we get into what's in this book, let's take a moment and try and figure out what the hell Valiant was thinking when the relaunch of Rai was titled *Rai and the Future Force*. What kind of name is Future Force? It's like some cheesy grade B movie Sci-Fi flick you'd see on *MST3K* or something. What we have here is the first appearance of Rai. Even though he got his ticket punched in *Unity*, he was a major character in the Valiant Universe and all of his own books have become hot collectibles. Soooo....his first appearance here in the low print run *Magnus* #5 has become one of the more desired books on the market.

© TODD MCFARLANE.

SPAWN #4
Artist: Todd McFarlane
Writer: Todd McFarlane

Even though the Image books sell better than almost everything out there, they continue to increase in value on the secondary market. Take *Spawn* for instance. Tons of those things are printed every month, and they still increase in value. Then along comes "Image Comics month," where all the Image books that came out that month include a redeemable coupon that, when mailed in with the other coupons, gets you a copy of *Image Comics* #0. What drove this book nuts was the fact that everybody was gobbling up multiple copies of it, leaving retailers who thought they ordered enough scratching their heads (among other things) and thinking "wha' happen'?"



© VALIANT.

RAI #0
Artist: David Lapham
Writer: Bob Layton

It's so easy to have fans stop and gasp in astonishment when you slap foil, chromium, prisms and gatefolds on your cover, but it's really an accomplishment when you can do it with three colors. In today's market, that would be enough to make this a hot back issue, but, oh no, not good enough for those hyperactive dudes and dudettes at Valiant. This is also one of the sickest stories ever to be published. This book sets the stage for the entire Valiant universe, and shows us the "birth" and first appearance of the new Rai, and the last stands of X-O Manowar, Archer, Bloodshot and that evil jerkweed Toyo Harada. All really awesome stuff that's gone over great with the fans.

© JIM LEE.

WILDC.A.T.S #2
Artist: Jim Lee
Writer: Jim Lee

Hey, more Image books. Aside from a prismatic cover that will give you an aneurysm if you stare at it too long, what else is in this little critter? Why, it's named after that stupid Goldie Hawn football movie and it's got one o' them hot redeemable coupon thingies. But what about the other books involved with that offer? Why aren't *Brigade* #1, *Cyberforce* #1, or the other coupon books on this list? Hey, it only goes to show the power and fan following that Todd McFarlane and Jim Lee have. Expect all the Image coupon books to become hotter and hotter as the mail-in deadline approaches, and the value of the books involved start to climb the buckage ladder. ☆

TOP 100 DECEMBER - 1992

Here's the list for December...the countdown of the top selling titles sold as reported by Diamond Comic Distributors, Inc.

1 Venom #1
2 Spawn #8
3 Punisher 2099 #1
4 Pitt #2
5 Wetworks #3
6 X-Men #17
7 Uncanny X-Men #297
8 Spider-Man 2099 #4
9 Youngblood: Battlezone #1
10 X-Force #19
11 Amazing Spider-Man #374
12 Supreme #4
13 Doom 2099 #2
14 X-Factor #87
15 Superman #76
16 Superman: Man of Steel #20
17 Adventures of Superman #499
18 Punisher #75
19 Wolverine #66
20 Action Comics #686
21 Bloodshot #2
22 Spider-Man #31
23 Ravage 2099 #3
24 Doctor Strange #50
25 Ghost Rider #34
26 Shadow Riders #1
27 Robin III #4
28 Robin III #5
29 Death's Head II #3
30 Archer & Armstrong/ Eternal Warrior #8
31 Spirits of Vengeance #7
32 X-O Manowar #14
33 Incredible Hulk #402
34 Incredible Hulk: Future Imperfect #1
35 Splitting Image #2
36 Morbius #6
37 Spectacular Spider-Man #197
38 Web of Spider-Man #97
39 H.A.R.D.Corps #4
40 Spider-Man: Skating on Thin Ice
41 Battletide #3
42 Silver Surfer #77
43 Spider-Man: Double Trouble
44 X-Men Adventures #4
45 Punisher War Zone #12
46 Shadow of the Bat #9
47 Legends of the Dark Knight #42
48 Spider-Man: Hit & Run
49 Excalibur #62
50 Warlock & Infinity Watch #13
51 Spider-Man: Chaos In Calgary
52 Batman: Seduction of the Gun #1
53 New Warriors #32
54 Wolverine: Inner Fury
55 Thor #459
56 Harbinger #15
57 What If? #46
58 Shadowman #11
59 Iron Man #289
60 Marvel Comics Presents #121
61 Marvel Comics Presents #122
62 Magnus: Robot Fighter #22
63 Fantastic Four #373
64 Sandman #46
65 Solar #19
66 Dracula #3
67 Punisher War Journal #51
68 Batman #489
69 Ren & Stimpy #3
70 Darkhawk #24
71 Detective Comics #656
72 Nightstalkers #4
73 Next Men #10
74 Silver Sable #9
75 Guardians of the Galaxy #33
76 Darkhold #5
77 Grendel: War Child #5
78 Captain America #412
79 Punisher Armory #5
80 Namor #35
81 Daredevil #313
82 Justice League America #71
83 Avengers #359
84 Nomad #10
85 Team Helix #2
86 Batman Adventures #5
87 New Titans #95
88 Avengers West Coast #91
89 Deathlok #20
90 Team Titans #6
91 Deathstroke #19
92 Alpha Flight #117
93 Incomplete Death's Head #2
94 Eclipso #4
95 Showcase '93 #2
96 Quasar #43
97 Classic Star Wars #5
98 Justice League Europe #47
99 Green Arrow: Wonder Year #1
100 Green Lantern #36

Who's in the TOP 100?

	# books in top 10	# books in top 50	# books in top 100
Marvel	6 (+0)	32 (+6)	60 (+6)
DC Comics	- (-1)	8 (-4)	22 (-3)
Image	4 (+2)	7 (-2)	7 (-2)
Dark Horse	- (+0)	- (-1)	3 (+1)
Valiant	- (-1)	3 (+1)	7 (-1)
Topps	- (+0)	- (-1)	1 (+0)

(+ or - indicates change from last month's listings)

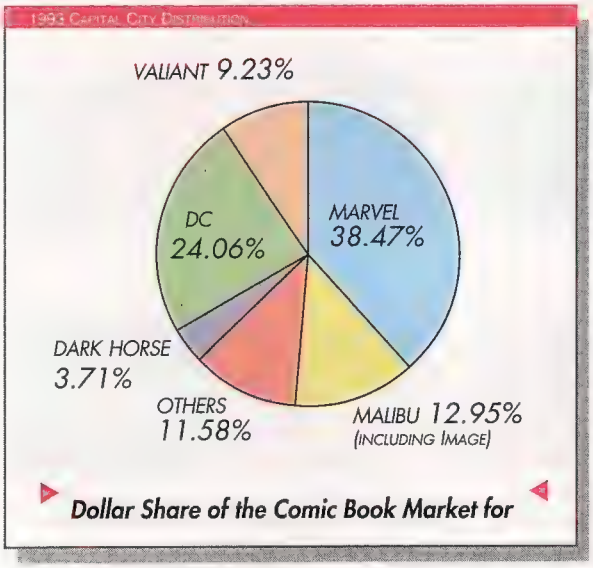
TOP 10 DECEMBER 1991

1 X-Men #5
2 Uncanny X-Men #285
3 X-Force #7
4 Warlock & The Infinity Watch #1
5 Robin II: Joker's Wild #4 (Direct Market)
6 Spider-Man #19
7 X-Factor #75
8 Hearts of Darkness
9 Wolverine #51
10 Punisher #60

Wizard Market WATCH

DC Comics is without a doubt the biggest news this month thanks to the death of "Earth's Mightiest Hero", the event chronicled in the pages of the now infamous *Superman* #75, which, by the way, also happens to be the best-selling Superman book of all time (rough figures place it in the 2.5-3 million seller range). When it was first announced six months ago that DC was going to ax Superman, the fans reacted with "Oh sure, they'll kill him off for a couple of issues and then bring him back," which is pretty much true. But Joe Schmoe on the street didn't know that. The result? A book that's going nuts in the secondary market. The price is so volatile that on the date of its release, some stores were fetching as high as $35-$40 a copy. Was this dramatic increase in price due to the flock of comic collectors beating down doors looking for a copy of *Supes* #75? No. It was because of the media attention surrounding this historic (though temporary) event. The non-comic buying public was worked into a frenzy over this death issue by the media, and when the book finally hit the stands, they *had* to own it, no matter what the cost. Store owners realized this, and the uneducated consumer (along with their wallets) got raked over the coals. This shouldn't come as much of a surprise, as similarly hyped books (*Batman* #428, *Superman* #50 & *Alpha Flight* #106) all experienced sudden and massive price increases, brought about by the "outside" consumers. After all the hype died down and the 24-hour comic fans vanished from the stores, the prices of these "hot" books inexorably began their journey down the price chart. That's to be expected. Anyone who falls for all that over-hype deserves a slap in the face to wake them up, something they're sure to get if they ever check up on their $35 copy of *Superman* #75, the one that somewhere down the line will be selling for a whopping nine clams. What's unbelievable are the comic buyers that have been around the block a couple of times that fall prey to the over-hyped titles and pay top dollar, or those that believe that the book is actually worth the inflated price. Don't expect *Superman* #75 to maintain itself at any substantial price.

Aside from the Death of Superman hubbub, DC is very low key this



Dollar Share of the Comic Book Market for

Piece Share of the Comic Book Market for

month. Even the formation of Vertigo (their mature oriented imprint) and Milestone (the "multi-cultural imprint) aren't generating any major waves in the comic industry. If DC follows up on these new projects and properly promotes them, it could do wonders for bringing new consumers into the industry.

Valiant is still the most consistent comics publisher in the market today, as their growing line of titles never fails to deliver when it comes to providing entertainment as well as hot collectiblity. Case in point is the chromium covered *Bloodshot* #1, which was a highly anticipated book and was ordered heavily (the #4 book on Diamond's Top 100 seller chart for the month of November), but has become a hot back issue regardless of its substantial print run. Within a few days of its release, it was already selling for $6, which is almost double its cover price.

Other hot back issues on the Valiant Bar-B-Q are *Eternal Warrior* #4 & #5 featuring the debut of Bloodshot, *Magnus* #12 featuring the first Valiant appearance of Turok (soon to star in his own monthly series), *Rai* #0 which features the origin of Bloodshot and *Shadowman* #8, the first appearance of Master Darque. Other V books to keep an eye on are *X-O* #14 & 15 for their Turok appearances and the *Archer & Armstrong/Eternal Warrior* #8 joint title release.

Rumors are also circulating concerning more Valiant cross-company promotions, similar to the Predator/Magnus mini series co-produced with Dark Horse. No word yet as to what other publishers are involved.

Gold Key is coming to the forefront of the back-issue market as their Silver Age *Magnus: Robot Fighter, Doctor Solar* and *Turok, Son of Stone* are all experiencing strong sales resurgence thanks to the popularity of their modern age Valiant counterparts. Expect the Gold Key Turok title to experience major price increases when the new Valiant Turok series debuts in '93.

Image Comics continues to suffer from major delays, with several books delayed for months for no apparent reason (just where is *Wetworks* #1?). Regardless of this, fans continue to support the Image line, making them some of the best selling books in the market today and turning the Image creators into superstars.

As far as their back-issue sales go, Image is solid as a rock. The hottest issues are their mail-away coupon insert books, which when combined-were redeemable for *Image Comics* #0. The hottest picks out of that bunch are *Shadowhawk* #1 (with the help of an awesome foil embossed cover), *WildC.A.T.s* #2 and *Cyberforce* #1. As far as non-coupon related back issues go, *Brigade* #1, *Savage Dragon* #1, *Spawn* #1 and *Youngblood* #1 have all risen considerably.

Marvel continues to be unbeatable in new market sales, though their back issues have definitely taken a back seat to Image and Valiant. Even such heavy hitters as Cable, Sabretooth and Deathlok are stone cold. The only thing that's really moving are the key Silver Age issues (first Silver Surfer & 1st Spidey are hot), as well as back issues of the '70s *Tomb of Dracula* series. Oddly enough, the new *Ren & Stimpy* comic has gone over great with the fans, and is selling strong at the $4-8 range. Happy! Happy! Joy! Joy!

Overall, the alternative market is pretty quiet. With few exceptions (like Dark Horse's red hot *Star Wars: Dark Empire* series), the back issue bins belong to Image & Valiant. As far as new market sales go, that's Image, Valiant and Marvel territory. And for the foreseeable future, that's how it's going to be.

WIZARD'S TOP TEN HOTTEST ARTISTS

PHOTO: AL ORTEGA

1. TODD McFARLANE
SPAWN

2. JIM LEE
WILDC.A.T.S

PHOTO: AL ORTEGA

3. ROB LIEFELD
YOUNGBLOOD

4. JAE LEE
NAMOR

5. MARC SILVESTRI
CYBERFORCE

6. DALE KEOWN
THE PITT

7. SAM KIETH
MARVEL COMICS PRESENTS
DARKER IMAGE

PHOTO: AL ORTEGA

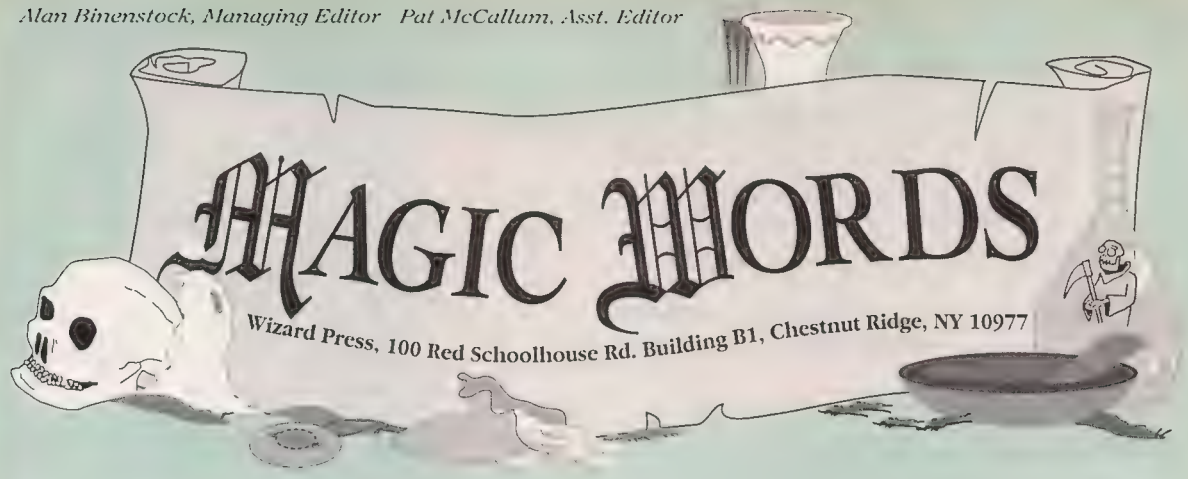
8. MARK BAGLEY
AMAZING SPIDER-MAN,
VENOM

PHOTO: AL ORTEGA

9. WHILCE PORTACIO
UPCOMING: *WETWORKS*

10. RON LIM
SILVER SURFER

Alan Binenstock, Managing Editor Pat McCallum, Asst. Editor



The Scavenger Hunters That Time Forgot
Gordon "The Flash" Reichert- Brooklyn, NY
Trevor "Trev" Straton- Stone Heights, MI

Dear Wizard,

Just thought I'd drop you a line and say I love the job you're doing, and that you're a breath of fresh air compared to the other comic magazines out there. Thanks for being different.

Charles Roth
Spring Valley, N.Y.

What a nice letter. I get the feeling that the letters page this month is going to be one big happy family.

To the traitors at Wizard,

You back-stabbing butt weasels! Just how two-faced can you be?! First you condemn comic companies for making cheap gimmicks such as multiple covers (*Spider-Man* #1), polybagged issues ("Rise of the Midnight Sons"), and multiple card inserts (*X-Force* #1) to increase sales. Then you turn right around and stab us in the back with *Wizard* #17! Look, I can understand why you polybagged issues #10+, because it kept the cards in and prevented their theft. But making three variants of the exact same comic is definitely crossing the line! The way I see it, you guys are shamelessly forcing consumers into buying three copies! Why not just put all three Santa cards into one comic and charge us an extra buck? It's cheaper! Why the heck should we have to spend an extra $7.90 for two more cards!

Paul Perkins
La Crescenta, CA

P.S. Pat McCallum, in *Wizard* #15 said: "When it comes to polybagging a book, it's done for a few specific reasons:

1.) To keep any added bonus (such as a trading card) from falling out or being stolen from the book.

2.) To protect a book during shipping - in the case of the *Spider-Man* issues, it was done so that the hologram covers wouldn't be scratched.

3.) To "shamelessly force consumers into buying two copies."

I contend that these points are also valid in the case of trading cards. Adding cards to your magazine is acceptable (preferable even). Making an extra convention magazine with different cards, a different cover, and a different content is also acceptable. But having three different cards in the same magazine is deplorable! It is nothing less than a shameless attempt to force consumers into buying three copies and it really bites!

...Okay. Paul's comments, no matter how harsh, are essentially correct. Since our inception, we at *Wizard* have taken a stand against the cheap multiple gimmicks that a great deal of publishers resort to to increase the sales of certain issues, like producing multiple cards and polybagging them into different copies of the same issue. Like *Wizard* #17. What we hoped to accomplish by polybagging the book with one of three different Image Christmas cards was to get retailers to keep pace with the comic book industry. Most retailers, according to our surveys, have not been keeping up with the increased demand for *Wizard*, and sell out within the first day or so and remain *Wizard*-less the rest of the month. By running one of these "gimmicks," retailers would order more on this issue, and have extra to keep in stock, showing that *Wizard* is more than just a quick sell, it's a solid book. It sells when it first hits the stands, it sells after it's been out a couple of weeks, and it sells after it's in stock for a couple of months. We wanted retailers to see that *Wizard* is more than just that month's price guide or news magazine. Though our methods got us multiple angry responses (that's you Paul), our intentions were to broaden our fan base, not "*rape*" our fans. On behalf of *Wizard*, I apologize for any problems this promotion caused, and assure you that a promotion similar to this will never be run again.

Dear Wizard,

My question has to do with *Unity* #0. In issue #11 of *Wizard*, in the Top 10 you show *Unity* #0 in the number eight position. The *Unity* #0 that is pictured isn't the blue or the red bar version, but has a black bar. Is this an error or is there an actual copy of *Unity* #0 with the black bar?

Adam de Sousa
Fairhaven, MA

Ooops. That "book" in actuality was an ad for *Unity* taken from some magazine, and believe it or not, it never occurred to us that it might cause some confusion. No black bar *Unity* #0's exist. We won't run an altered cover like that again.

Dear Wizard,

I've got it! I've figured out who the X-traitor is! It's not one of your obvious choices like Bishop or Forge. This person isn't even a member of an X-team yet. It is Franklin Richards. Now before you throw this letter out, let me explain. Comics have hinted at Franklin getting new mutant powers. Franklin's parents won't be able to handle this, so they will send little Franklin to Professor Xavier to join the

ASK THE WIZARD!

Have a question that's nagging the crap out of you? Jot it down and mail it off to "Ask the Wizard," c/o Wizard Press, 100 Red Schoolhouse Rd., Bldg. B-1, Chestnut Ridge, NY 10977.

Q: Can Wolverine's claws cut through The Thing?
Marten C. Jager, Pendleton, OR.
A: Yup.

Q: Will Superman come back to life?
Scotty S. Krupnick, Brooklyn, N.Y.
A: In early '93.

Q: Can the Hulk bend adamantium?
Brian Sorci & Tom Roche, Phoenix, AZ.
A: The old "Hulk Smash" one could if he got really P.O.ed.

X-Men. Then for some reason or another the X-Men will battle the Fantastic Four and Franklin will turn on the X-Men and wipe them all out in issue #350 of *Uncanny X-Men*. How about that?

Erick Peterson
Richland, WA

You know, when I first started reading this letter, I thought "Hey, this sounds kinda cool. He may have something here." Then I finished the letter. Next...

Dear Wizard,

I am 20 years old and have been collecting comic books for about 11 years. In all my years of collecting I would like to say that *Wizard* is by far the best and improving price guide I have ever read. I can see that a tremendous amount of effort goes into making this mag perfect in every way.

Now for the reason I am writing this letter (not that the above paragraph wasn't the reason), lots of collectors myself included have been discussing this issue for quite some time and it is the polybag issue. In *Wizard* #14 you have stated that polybags should not be collected, that they damage the comic book in the long run and I agree. Yet as you say this, in your very own mag you list comic books that are polybagged as worth more than the ones that are not or the ones that have been opened to be read by the collector. For example, *Spider-Man* #1 black cover is listed at $6.50...black cover bagged $25.00, green cover $6.00...green cover bagged $12.00, *X-Force* #1 bagged books range from $3.50 to $5.25 depending on what card is with the comic book. *X-Force* #1 unbagged without card is only $1.75. I think you know what I am getting at.

Jirair Afarian
Ontario, CANADA

Yeah, I know what you're getting at. Regardless of what our personal beliefs are on the controversial polybags issue, our price guide has to reflect what's going on in the market place, not what we feel is right or wrong. Whether we like it or not, sealed polybagged issues are, on average, worth more in the market than their opened counterparts.

Dear Wizard,

I really love your guide! It practically has everything I'm looking for in it. Except one thing! How come there's nothing about Japanese comics in it?

Patrick Trienta
San Diego, CA

A section on Japanese comics/animation & toys is in consideration and may find it's way into the book in late '93.

Dear Wizard,

When *Shadow Hawk* #1 was shipped I freaked out. It has such a great cover that I had to buy multiple copies, six to be exact. Anyway, that night when I sat down to read my comics the first one I picked up was *Shadow Hawk* #1. So I opened the cover and the first thing I saw was another cover, but of *The Knights of Pendragon* #4. Astonished I flipped another page and out of nowhere came the *Moon Knight Special* #1 story from page 9 to 40, (and we all know Moon Knight is LAME.) Followed by the back cover of the *Knights of Pendragon* and *Shadow Hawk*. When I picked up the rest of my *Shadow Hawk* #1s I found out I had three error copies in all. I had a very good friend of mine call Malibu Press. The book, like all Image books, was printed at Ronalds in Quebec. It seems they printed 1,000 errors and they thought they withheld them all. But after they were shipped out, they counted again; this time they only counted 993. Meaning that seven got out into the public. What I would like to know is what value does this error book have if any?

Michelangelo Ianiro
Montreal, Quebec, Canada

Bull. I called Ronalds on 11/25/92 and asked about this little *Shadow Hawk* thing. What that book is is a "packer" book, something that is thrown together really quickly and is used to see how many copies of a title can fit in a box. It is not an error that they tried to hold back.

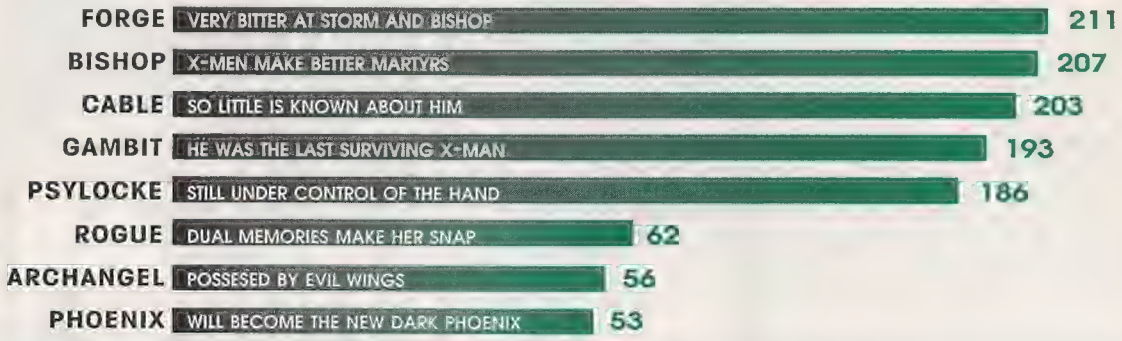
Dear Wizard:

I want to start off by saying how great your mag is. State-of-the-art artwork and articles, I mean it. I myself have a subscription. It is awesome!

In response to Karen Righeimer of Illinois (in issue #16), I know what happened to Boba Fett and how he is now among the land of the living. In one of those stupid *Star Wars* comics by Marvel (I only bought it because I needed something to read on a ten hour car trip) he is eaten by the Sarlacc Pit. But, later in the comic, the Pit, having indigestion, burps. This gave Boba Fett a chance to escape, which he did. His rocket pack was really muffed up, so he only flew just outside of the Pit. Now, you all remember those cute little Jawas (the dudes covered in rags, talking in voices with a higher pitch than Pee Wee Herman [which you can't understand] and selling discount robots). Well, these guys just happened to be

X-TRAITORS?

Think you know who the traitor was that was hinted at in *Uncanny X-Men* #287? Drop us a line at "X-Traitor," c/o Wizard Press, 100 Red Schoolhouse Rd., Bldg B-1, Chestnut Ridge NY 10977. Characters are listed alongside how many votes they received calling them traitor, and what the fans believe to be their strongest motivations why. Characters that have recieved less than 50 votes will not be listed.



on their daily rounds looking for damaged bodies. They found good ol' Mr. Fett and took him into their moving apartment complex. They fixed him up and then he left, leaving them bewildered.

All this really did happen, I swear on all my couple thousand comic books! Well, until people get off their Neanderthal kick and stop blaming Gambit (my favorite character) for destroying the X-Men, Make Mine Wizard!!!!!!

Burke White
Maurice, LA

Thanks for the info, but I don't think that Dark Horse is basing their *Star Wars* series of books on anything Marvel has done. And how stupid is it that the Sarlacc Pit belched?

Dear Wizard:

1.) If the Flash were to race Quicksilver, who would win?

2.) Can you roast marshmallows on Ghost Rider's head?

3.) What if Beta Ray Bill and Eric Masterson as Thor threw their hammers at each other as hard as they could and they collided, what would happen?

4.) Will you print this letter?

Well that's it. And just a reminder, until Spider-Man runs out of web fluid, make mine Wizard.

Jason Rile
Woodbury, NJ

1.) The Flash
2.) Yup. S'mores too.
3.) You'd probably get the same sound as when the Sarlacc Pit has gas.
4.) Yup

Dear Wizard,

Most importantly I'd like to say besides the outrageous $3.95 cover price, your magazine is superb. However, that is not why I've chosen to write.

About four years ago I began what is now a very extensive comic-book collection. The reason I started collecting was the fact that these "kid" books did something to me that nothing else had ever done, my mind was opened up and I was given the opportunity to explore new places, new people, and I could escape from all of the garbage that is happening in the real world.

I am now 20 years old and continue to be fascinated by artists such as Marc Silvestri, Jim Lee, and Todd Mcyouknowwho. I am captivated by the writings of Neil Gaiman, Peter David, and John Byrne. That is the true essence of what comic books are, not this unfortunate worry of how much a comic will be worth someday. This is just one showing of the garbage I referred to.

Who cares if it comes poly-bagged or if the cover glows in the dark. Open them up, turn your lights on, read and enjoy. If you finish reading and find yourself flabbergasted, then that book is worth more than any amount of money.

Jeff Scott
Southgate, MI

Dear Wizard,

I buy your magazine every month and it gets better all the time. I have a few questions:

1.) What ever happened to the section called My Kind of Hero?

2.) What is the Marvel No-Prize?

3.) Are you ever going to have a section for writers?

4.) Why does Robin (from Batman) have the dumbest costume?

5.) How do you get your characters copyrighted?

Jeremy Field
Portland, OR

Hey, Jeremy. Thanks for the kind words. As for your questions:
1.) It's back.
2.) An empty envelope.
3.) We're kicking around some ideas.
4.) Says you.
5.) Take your creations down to your local copyright office and they'll help you out.

Dear Wizard,

After reading *X-Factor* #75, an idea came up that Cable is not Cyclops' son but Havok and Polaris' son (possibly they get married and have a son in the future). Mr. Sinister does not want anything to happen to these two Geecees. Cable seems not to have feelings for Scott, but what about Alex?

Austin Sims
Lubbock, TX

Hey, here's a pretty good new theory, though from the way Stryfe (Cable clone/baby Nathan?) acted in The X-cutioners Song, it's a safe bet that if he's anyone's son, he's Cyclops'.

Dear Wizard,

Doug (may I call you "Doug"?), you have admitted defeat too easily, my friend. You and I both know Iron Man

is perfectly capable of destroying the gene-jokes, I mean X-Men, single-handedly. Don't worry about targeting systems not locking on to them, or "psychic-power-proof" helmets. Check this out:

There's no need for a psychic-proof helmet. If you'll recall recent issues of *Iron Man*, there need not be a body in the suit! Tony can control it remotely. There's no "mental presence" to detect (much less a brain to fry), and there's no scent for Logan to smell. In a surprise attack, the hollow suit immediately picks off Xavier, Jean, and Psylocke. The X-Men try to engage but the suit is high in the air, picking them off. His only problem might be Archangel. Tony has pre-set the self-destruct system. When Warren gets close, the suit explodes taking Archangel with it. The X-Men are stunned momentarily by this (no Prof. X to keep 'em sharp); at this moment, in comes Tony Stark in his big, bad black and white armor with all guns blazing. Who needs targeting systems when ya got visual contact and enough guns to blanket the area?

Shellhead would be eating Mutie Burgers five minutes later.

David Wright
Columbus, GA

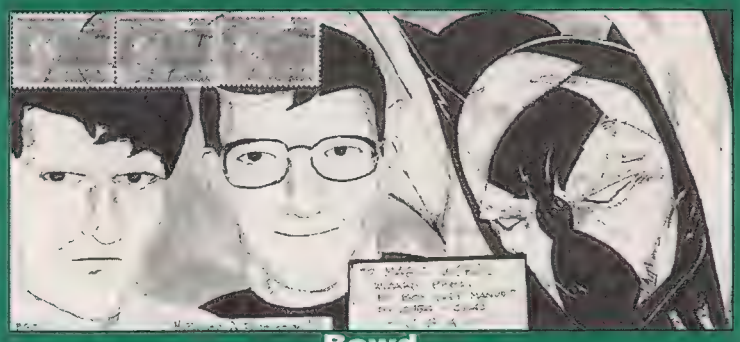
And the response from Doug-
Hmm. You know, I never thought of sending, like, a whole mess of Iron Man suits against the X-Men, all on remote control. I guess the X-Men wouldn't last more than two minutes, would they? Okay, I take it back! Tony Stark can not only single-handedly kill all of the X-Men with ease, but he doesn't even have to get his hands dirty! Cool!!

-D.G.

Well, that's about it from the mighty Wizard. Keep sending in your Pen-Pal entries, and we'll start running them as soon as all the bugs are out. Other than that, I'm outta here. Happy New Year everybody! ☆

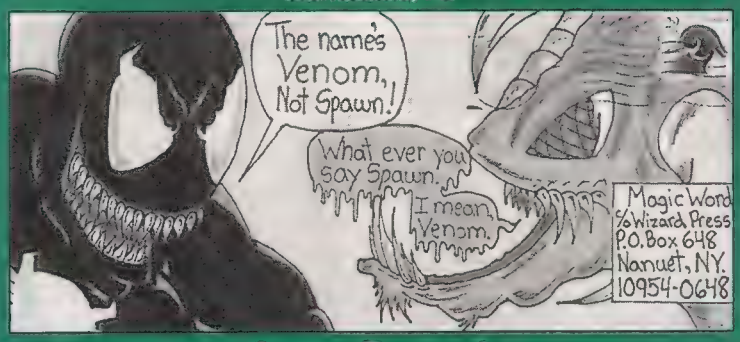
Fabulous Letter Art

Thanks for the terrific letter art. Every month our diehard fans with talent to burn adorn their praise (or complaints), sometimes, we think, just to get a little extra attention. Guess what. It works. Here are four for this month!
(Remember, we can only show letter-size envelopes. Thanks!)

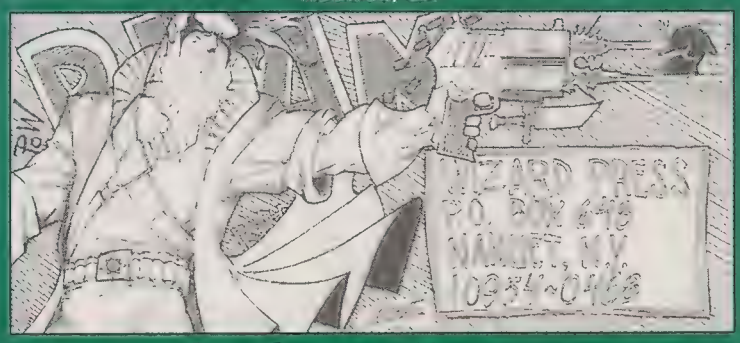


Bowd
Jakarta, Indonesia

Eric Carter
Norristown, PA



Aaron Renaud
Roswell, GA



Pvt. Gustavo Vazquez
Fort Sill, OK

SHOWS AND CONVENTIONS

WIZARD IS NOT RESPONISBLE FOR INCORRECT OR FALSE SHOW CALENDAR INFORMATION.

ARKANSAS

JAN 2, AR, LITTLE ROCK, Comics and Cards Extravaganza, Master's Inn-I-30 & 9th Street(Exit 140), T:25, F:$50, A:$1.50, 9am-5pm. Doug Woodrome 501-847-4533

CALIFORNIA

JAN 1-3, CA, SAN JOSE, 3 Day Sports Card and Comic Book Show, 1570 Branaham in the Old H.S. Room's 40 & 41 at the Corner of Branaham and Meridian, T:45 F:$15-$45 per day, $70-$100 per show, Fri 5pm-9pm, Sat 10am-6pm, Sun 10am-5pm, Jerry 408-984-1425

JAN 2 CA, FRESNO, Card & Comic Convention, Holiday Inn Airport, 5090 E. Clinton Way. T:45 F:$40,2@$70 A:$1, 9am-3pm, Joe Manzo, 209-292-2890

JAN 4 CA, FRESNO, Comic & Card Show, Picadilly Inn University, 4961 N. Cedar (At Shaw), T:24 F:$35 A:$1, 5pm-9pm, Joe Manzo, 209-292-2890

JAN 4 CA, FRESNO, Comic & Card Show, Picadilly Inn University, 4961 N. Cedar. T:24 F:$35 A:$1, 5pm-9pm, Joe Manzo 209-292-2890

JAN 6, CA, WALNUT, Baseball card/Comics/McDonald Collectables, Frank & Son Warehouse-19465 East Walnut Dr. T:100, F:$25, A:Free, 5pm-9:30pm, Frank 714-594-7492

JAN 8-10, CA, SAN JOSE, 3 Day Sports Card and Comic Book Show, 1570 Branaham in the Old H.S. Rooms 40 & 41. T:45 F:$15-$45 per day, $70-$100 per show, Fri 5pm-9pm, Sat 10am-6pm, Sun 10am-5pm, Jerry 408-984-1425

JAN 8-10, CA, ANTIOCH, New Year Card & Comic Mall Show, County East Mall, Delta Fair Blvd. T:50 F:$115 A:free, Mall Hours, 510-874-4992

JAN 9, CA, WALNUT, Baseball card/Comics/McDonald Collectables, Frank & Son Warehouse-19465 East Walnut Dr. T:100, F:$25, A:Free, 5pm-9:30pm, Frank 714-594-7492

JAN 10 CA, VAN NUYS, Valley Comic Book and Collectible Show, Ethel Ave. and Hatteras St. T:40, F:$30 A:$2 Dennis Schumacher

JAN 13, CA, WALNUT, Baseball card/Comics/McDonald Collectables, Frank & Son Warehouse-19465 East Walnut Dr. T:100, F:$25, A:Free, 5pm-9:30pm, Frank 714-594-7492

JAN 15-17, CA, SAN JOSE, 3 Day Sports Card and Comic Book Show, 1570 Branaham. T:45 F: $15-$45 per day, $70-$100 per show, Fri 5pm-9pm, Sat 10am-6pm, Sun 10am-5pm, Jerry 408-984-1425

JAN 16, CA, WALNUT, Baseball card/Comics/McDonald Collectables, Frank & Son Warehouse-19465 East Walnut Dr. T:100, F:$25, A:Free, 5pm-9:30pm, Frank 714-594-7492

JAN 17, CA, ANAHEIM, Grand Comic Show, Grand Hotel, Corner of Harbor & Freedman, T:65, F:$30, A:$2, 10am-5pm, Bill 714-771-2329

JAN 18 CA, FRESNO, Comic & Card Show, Picadilly Inn University, 4961 N. Cedar (At Shaw), T:24 F:$35 A:$1, 5pm-9pm, Joe Manzo, 209-292-2890

JAN 20, CA, WALNUT, Baseball card/Comics/McDonald Collectables, Frank & Son Warehouse-19465 East Walnut Dr. T:100, F:$25,·A:Free, 5pm-9:30pm, Frank 714-594-7492

JAN 22-24, CA, SAN JOSE, 3 Day Sports Card and Comic Book Show, 1570 Branaham in the Old H.S. Rooms 40 & 41 T:45 F:$15-$45 per day, $70-$100 per show, Fri 5pm-9pm, Sat 10am-6pm, Sun 10am-5pm, Jerry 408-984-1425

JAN 23, CA, WALNUT, Baseball card/Comics/McDonald Collectables, Frank & Son Warehouse-19465 East Walnut Dr. T:100, F:$25, A:Free, 5pm-9:30pm, Frank 714-594-7492

JAN 24, CA, BUENA PARK, Orange County Comic, Cards & Collectables Show, Sequoia Athletic Club-7530 Orange Thorpe Ave. T:80, F:$65, A:$5, 10am-4pm, Mark 714-647-7225

JAN 24 CA, BUENA PARK, Orange County Comic, Card & Collectible Show, Sequoia Athletic Club, 7530 Orangethorpe Ave., T:75 F:$65 A:$5 (under10free), 10am-4pm, Mark Ramsey, 714-647-7225

JAN 24 CA, CARSON, South's Bay's Comic Book, Non-Sport Card & Collectible Show, 801 E. Carson St., T:65+ F:$45 A: $3, M&M Productions, 818-917-6728

JAN 27, CA, WALNUT, Baseball card/Comics/McDonald Collectables, Frank & Son Warehouse-19465 East Walnut Dr. T:100, F:$25, A:Free, 5pm-9:30pm, Frank 714-594-7492

JAN 29-31, CA SAN JOSE, 3 Day Sports Card and Comic Book Show, 1570 Branaham in the Old H.S. Room's 40 & 41. T:45 F:$15-$45 per day, $70-$100 per show, Fri 5pm-9pm, Sat 10am-6pm, Sun 10am-5pm, Jerry 408-984-1425

JAN 30, CA, WALNUT, Baseball card/Comics/McDonald Collectables, Frank & Son Warehouse-19465 East Walnut Dr. T:100, F:$25, A:Free, 5pm-9:30pm, Frank 714-594-7492

JAN 30-31 CA WEST COUIND, A Mall Comic Book Show, Eastland Shopping Center, 2648 E. Workman Ave, West Covina. T:100 F:$100 A: free, Sat. 10am-6pm, Sun 11am-5pm, Derek M. Borthwick Show Productions, 818-9163-4046

JAN 31 CA, GLENDALE, Comic, Sportscard & Collectable Show, Glendale Civic Auditorium, 1401 N. Verdugo RD. T:60 F:$40-50 A:$2.50(under 6free) 10am-4pm, Dean Chen 818-842-1861

FEB 1 CA, FRESNO, Comic & Card Show, Picadilly Inn University, 4961 N. Cedar (At Shaw), T:24 F:$35 A:$1, 5pm-9pm, Joe Manzo, 209-292-2890

FEB 3, CA, WALNUT, Baseball card/Comics/McDonald Collectables, Frank & Son Warehouse-19465 East Walnut Dr. T:100 F:$25 A:Free, 5pm-9:30pm, Frank 714-594-7492

FEB 6, CA, WALNUT, Baseball card/Comics/McDonald Collectables, Frank & Son Warehouse-19465 East Walnut Dr. T:100, F:$25, A:Free, 5pm-9:30pm, Frank 714-594-7492

FEB 10, CA, WALNUT, Baseball card/Comics/McDonald Collectables, Frank & Son Warehouse-19465 East Walnut Dr. T:100, F:$25, A:Free, 5pm-9:30pm, Frank 714-594-7492

FEB 13, CA, WALNUT, Baseball card/Comics/McDonald Collectables, Frank & Son Warehouse-19465 East Walnut Dr. T:100, F:$25, A:Free, 5pm-9:30pm, Frank 714-594-7492

CONNECTICUT

JAN 9 CT, NAUGATUCK, Baseball Card & Comic Book Show, Elk's Lodge #967, Rubber Ave. T:50 A:Free 9am-3pm, Thomas Bryk 203- 723-9289

JAN 10 CT, WINDSOR LOCKS, Holiday Inn, 16 Ella Grasso Tpke., exit 40 of I-91 on Rt. 75, T:25 F:$30 A:$1, 10am-4pm, Mike Wimblish, 203-242-1189

JAN 10, CT, DANBURY, Comics Cards & More, Danbury Hilton Towers-18 Old Ridgebury Rd. T:57 F:$55 A:$2, 10am-4pm, Donald 203-746-7531

JAN 16, CT, WATERBURY, Comic Book & Card Expo, Red Bull Inn-Exit 25 I-84, T:44, F:$25, A:$1, 9:30am-3:00pm, Eric 203-757-9756

JAN 24, CT, WATERBURY, Comics Cards & More, P.U. Drubner Center-Route 63, T:50, F:$30-35, A:$2, 10am-4pm, Donald 203-746-7531

JAN 24, CT, MANCHESTER, Chris Sports Card & Comic Show, K of C-138 Main St. T:44, F:$30,2@$55 A:$0.99, 9am-4pm, Christopher 203-633-3898

JAN 24, CT, WALLINGFORD, Baseball Card-Comic Book & Coin Mania, Stillwood Inn-1074 South Colony RD, T:58, F:$55, A:$.99, Aurella Wacks-203-874-3545

JAN 31 CT WEST HARTFORD, The 4th West Hartford Comic Book Convention, Town hall/Auditorium, 50 South Main Street, T:40+ F:$35 A:$1.50 (under10free), 203-521-5161 or 203-523-8920

FEB 14, CT, DANBURY, Comics Cards & More, Danbury Hilton Towers-18 Old Ridgebury Rd. T:57, F:$55, A:$2, 10am-4pm, Donald 203-746-7531

DELAWARE

JAN 3, DE, WILMINGTON, Serendipity Comic Book Show, Sheraton Inn-4727 Concord Pike, A:$3, 11-4:30, Bob Horn 410-398-6685

JAN 31, DE, WILMINGTON, Reality Comic Con., Hilton, I-95 at 630 Naamans Rd. 10am-4pm, Info:301-791-8159

FRANCE

JAN 28-31 FRANCE, CHAMP DE MARS SUD, Salon International De La Bande Dessine'e, 1600 Angouleme, Jean-Luc Bittard (33) 45 92 45 99

GEORGIA

JAN 9-10 GA, GAINESVILLE, Comic Show, Lakeshore Mall, Washington St, F:$50, A:Free, 10am-4pm, Dana, 706-234-8210

JAN 16, GA, DULUTH, Extreme Comic Con, Dogwood Hall-Buford Highway. T:8 F:$25 A:$3 10am-6pm, John 404-410-9823

JAN 23-24 GA, ROME Riverbend Mall, Turner-McCall Blvd, T:25 F:50 A:Free, 10:00-9:00Sat, 12:00-6:00Sun, Dana Pinkard 706-234-8210

FEB 7, GA, ATLANTA, Reality Comic Con, Holiday Inn Buckhead, 3340 Peachtree Rd, NE —10am-4pm, 301-791-8159

ILLINOIS

JAN 17 IL, BLOOMINGDALE, Silver Reef Card & Comic 250 West Schick Road T:120, F:$40, A:$1.00 9:30am-4pm William Mueller 708-351-1799

JAN 10, IL, CRYSTAL LAKE, Sports Card & Comic Book Show, Holiday Inn-Rt. 31 & Three Oaks Roads. F:$30 A:$1 10am-3pm, 708-309-8204

JAN 24, IL, ORLAND PARK, Orland Park Card & Comic Show, Rte 45-147 st., T:60 F:$28 A:$1 9am-3pm, John Leary, 708-423-1758

SHOWS AND CONVENTIONS

INDIANA

JAN 3 IN, INDIANAPOLIS, Reality Comic Book Convention, Quality Inn East,3525 N Shadeland Ave, 10am-4pm, 301-791-8159

JAN 30 IN, HAMMOND Calumet Region Card & Comic Book Show 7527 Kennedy Ave T:25 F:$12.50 A:$1 9am-7:30pm Tom Grabowski 219-865-1563

FEB 14, IN, INDIANAPOLIS, Holiday Inn, I-70 East, 6990 East 21st Street, A:$4, 10am-4pm, Jubilee Ent. 301-292-4587

IOWA

FEB 6, IA, FORT MADISON, Baseball cards, comics & more show, Iowan Motor Lodge-Highway 61 South, T:17 F:$25 A:Free 9am-3pm, Stacey Craig 515-673-4087

LOIUSIANA

JAN 3 LA, LAFAYETTE: Sports Card & Comic Book Show; Holiday Inn North 2716 N.E. Evangeline Thruway, T:18 F:$35 A:$1 Rodney Bankston 318-332-1832

JAN 11-24 LA, METAIRIE, Valiant Touring Art Show, 3030 Severn Avenue, A:Free 10am-6pm, Stacy Tupper, 504-885-5250

MARYLAND

JAN 17, MD, BALTIMORE, Reality Comic Con., Holiday Inn Belmont, I-695 exit 17 at 1800 Belmont Ave, 10am-4pm, Info:301-791-8159

JAN 10, MD, TOWSON, Serendipity Comic Book Show-Quality Inn, Baltic Beltway exit 26S- A:$3 11-4:30, Bob Horn 410-398-6685

JAN 24, MD, COLUMBIA, Holiday Inn-7900 Washington Blvd. Rt. #175 & Rt. #1, 10am-4pm, Jubilee Ent. 301-292-4587

JAN 24, MD, BETHESDA, Serendipity Comic Book Show, Ramada Inn 8400 Wisonsin Ave. A:$311- 4:30, Bob Horn 410-398-6685

MASSACHUSETTS

JAN 7-10, MA, WATERTOWN, Watertown Mall-550 Arsenal St. A:Free, Bill 617-289-8662

JAN 21-24, MA, CHICOPEE, Fairfield Mall, Jct. Exit 5 Mass. Pike & Rt.33 A:Free, Bill 617-289-8662

JAN 31, MA, WOBURN, Howard Johnson, exit 36 off Rt 95, T:30 F:$30 A:$1 9am-3pm

MICHIGAN

JAN 3, MI, WARREN, Airborne Comic & Card Show, V.F.W. Post 9021-32100 Ryan Rd., T:23, F:$25, A:free, 10am-4pm, John 313-468-0954

JAN 10, MI, WARREN, Airborne Comic & Card Show, V.F.W. Post 9021-32100 Ryan Rd., T:23 F:$25 A:free 10am-4pm, John 313-468-0954

JAN 9 MI, MIDLAND, Comic, Sports Card, Coin and Stamp Show, Ramada Inn, 1815 S. Saginaw Rd. T:20 F:$35 A:Free, 10am-5pm, Jim Knarr, 517-631-4976

JAN 10 MI, SAGINAW, Comic, Sports Card, Coin and Stamp Show, Sheraton Inn, I-675 & Tittibawasee Rd. T:20 F:$35 A:Free 10am-3pm, Jim Knarr, 517-631-4976

JAN 16, MI, KALAMAZOO, Holiday Inn-2747 South 11th St. A:$4 10am-4pm, Jubilee Enterprises 301-292-4587

JAN 17, MI, LANSING, Sheraton-Lansing, 925 S. Creyts Road, 10am-4pm Jubilee Ent. 301-292-4587

JAN 24, MI, WARREN, Airborne Comic & Card Show, V.F.W. Post 2358-25671 Gratiot, T:23 F:$25 A:Free, 10am-4pm, John 313-468-0954

FEB 7, MI, WARREN, Airborne Comic & Card Show, V.F.W. Post 9021-32100 Ryan Rd., T:23 F:$25 A:Free 10am-4pm, John 313-468-0954

MINNESOTA

JAN 17 MN, MINNEAPOLIS, Comic Books & More, I-494 Mega-Mall, F:$40 A:Free 9am-6pm, Vince Nicholson 314-947-9581

NEVADA

JAN 17 NV, LAS VEGAS, Showboat Comic Book and Collectibles Convention, Showboat Hotel and Casino, 2800 Fremont St., T:80 F:$65 A:$3 (under 10 free), Lee Samuels, 702-658-1549

NEW HAMPSHIRE

JAN 14-17, NH, NASHUA, Royal Ridge MAll, JCT. Route 3, Exit one & D.W Highway A:Free, Bill 617-289-8662

NEW JERSEY

JAN 3 NJ, BORDENTOWN, Four Color Comic Art Convention, Days Inn, Rt. 206 North at exit 7 of the NJ Tpke, T:30 F:$35-$50 A:$3, 10am-4pm, Four Color Comic Art Conventions, 908-828-5955

JAN 3, NJ, WAYNE, Wayne Collectables Show, Co #1 Firemen's Hall- Parish Drive & Rt. 202N. T:110 F:$15Sun, $12.50Thurs. A:Free, 201-696-6217

JAN 9 NJ, TINTON FALLS-EATONTOWN, Monmouth Co. Comic Book Extra-vaganza, Holiday Inn, Parkway exit 105 at Hope Rd. T:40 F:$40 A:$2, 9:30am-4:30pm, Ruth Cambell 908-269-9486

JAN 9-10, NJ, SOUTH PLAINFIELD, World Of Cards & Comics, Middlesex Mall at Hadley and Stelton Road, T:80, F:$65Sat/$55Sun, A:Free,Sat 10am-9:30pm;Sun 11am-5pm, Tony 908-968-3886

JAN 9 NJ, WAYNE, Reality Comic Book Convention, Holiday Inn 1, Rt 46 West, 10am-4pm, 301-791-8159

JAN 10 NJ, WOODBRIDGE, Reality Comic Book Convention, Sheraton, 515 Rte 1 South, 10am-4pm, 301-791-8159

JAN 16 NJ, RAHWAY, Rahway Comic & Card Show, St. Thomas Church, 1407 St. Georges Ave., T:35 F:$40 A:$1 9am-5pm, George Mytro, 908-613-1206

JAN 16, NJ, RAHWAY, Rahway Comic& Card Show, St. Thomas Church 1407 St. Georges Ave. T:35, F:$40, A:$1, 9am-5pm, George Mytro 908-613-1206

JAN 17 NJ, BRICKTOWN, Dave's Dugout, Laurelton Fire Co. #1 Rt. 88 West, T:35 F:$40 A:$1.50, Dave Sumeriski, 908-892-5675

JAN 21, NJ, WAYNE, Wayne Collectables Show, Co #1 Firemen's Hall- Parish Drive & Rt. 202N. T:110, F$:15Sun. $12.50Thurs. A:Free Info-201-696-6217

JAN 21, NJ, HASBROUCK HGHTS, Nicks Cards & Comic Book Show, Sheraton-RT 17 Exit Terr Ave/Polifly RD. T:28 F:$30, A:$1.50

JAN 23, NJ, PARSIPPANY, Nick's Cards & Comic Book Show, Embassy Suites Hotel, T:37, F:$35, A:$2, Nick Turi 201-941-2224

JAN 24 NJ, TINTON FALLS-EATONTOWN, Monmouth Co. Comic Book Extra-vaganza, Holiday Inn, Parkway exit 105 at Hope Rd. T:40 F:$40 A:$2, 9:30am-4:30pm, Ruth Cambell 908-269-9486

JAN 24, NJ, EATONTOWN, Nick's Cards & Comic Book Show, Rt 35 So. & Ind Way, T:35, F:$45, A:$2, 9:30-4:30pm, Nick Turi 201-941-2224

JAN 30, NJ, EAST RUTHERFORD, B&P Cards & Comics, NJ Turnpike exit 16w-Sheraton Hotel, T:65, F:$40, A:$2, Nick Turi 201-592-8489

JAN 31, NJ, EDISON, Nicks Cards & Comics, Holiday Inn-Raritan Center, Rt 514 west, T:28, F:$40, A:$2, Nick Turi 201-941-2224

FEB 6 NJ, TINTON FALLS-EATONTOWN, Monmouth Co. Comic Book Extra-vaganza, Holiday Inn, Parkway exit 105 at Hope Rd. T:40 F:$40 A:$2, 9:30am-4:30pm, Ruth Cambell or Mary Stevenson, 908-269-9486 or 908-544-9300

FEB 6, NJ, HILLSBOROUGH, World Of Cards and Comics Conventions, Hillsborough Fire Co. #2, 375 Rt. 206, T:50, F:$43, A:$1.50, 10am-4pm, Tony 908-968-3886

FEB 6, NJ, WAYNE, Reality Comic Con. Holiday Inn, Rte. 46 West; 10am-4pm, Info:301-791-8159

FEB 7,18, NJ, WAYNE, Wayne Collectables Show- Co #1 Firemen's Hall, Parish Drive & Rt. 202N.; T:110, F:$15Sun. $12.50Thur. A:Free, Info-201-696-6217

FEB 7, NJ, WOODBRIDGE, Reality Comic Con. Sheraton 515 rte 1 South, 10am-4pm, Info:301-791-8159

NEW MEXICO

JAN 10 NM, ALBURQUERQUE, Nostalgia Conventions, 2101 Louisiana Blvd. N.E. at I-40, T: 32 F: $40 A: $2, 9am-5pm, Henry or Jim, 505-293-3065

NEW YORK

JAN 3,17,31 NY, BROOKLYN, Brooklyn's Big Sunday Show- 2164 Ralph Ave. & Ave L, T:45, F:$35, A:Free, 10am-5pm, Scotty O'Donnell 718-251-2075

JAN 3 NY, SARASOTA SPRINGS, Comic Show, St Clement's School GYM, 231 Lake Ave, T:30, F:$35, A:$1, 1pm-5pm, Rocco Rosato, 518-584-1429

JAN 8, 15, 29 NY, BROOKLYN, Brooklyn's Big Friday-nite Show, Bay Ridge Ave(69 ST) and 10th Ave. T:45, F:$35, A:Free 6pm-10pm, Scotty O'Donnell 718-251-2075

JAN 9, NY, FLORAL PARK, Comic, Baseball Card Show, St. Hedwig's Parish Hall, 309 Jericho Turnpike, T:45, F:$45, A:$1, 9:30-4:00, Ken Blitz-516-248-4235

JAN 9 NY, MANHATTAN, Nostalgia Con Toys Comics, Days Inn, 440 W. 57th St., T: 60 F: $60 A: $4, 10am-4pm, George Downes, 201-661-3358

JAN 9 NY, MANHATTAN, Baseball Card & Comic Show, Our Lady of Good Counsel School, 323 E 91st St, T:38, F:$30, A:$1, 10am-4pm, Kevin Mullurkey, 212-289-6730

JAN 9-10 NY, MOHEGAN LAKES, Nick's Cards & Comic Book Show, Route 6, Westchester Mall, T:45,

SHOWS AND CONVENTIONS

F:$50-90, A:Free 10am-9pm Nick Turi 201-941-2224

JAN 10, NY, WILLISTON PARK, Baseball Card Show, American Legion Hall, 730 Willis Ave. (LOWER LEVEL) A:$Free, 10am-4pm, Info-Paul 516-289-7398

JAN 10 NY, WILLISTON PARK, Baseball Card & Comic Book Show, American Legion Hall, 730 Willis Ave, A:$1(under12free), 10am-4pm, 516-289-7398

JAN 14, NY, DEER PARK, Comic & Sports Card Show, Constantino Brumidi Lodge-2075 Deer Park Ave., A:Free,6pm-10pm, Paul 516-289-7398

JAN 16, NY, LYNBROOK, St. Mary's Knights Of Columbus-78 Hempstead Ave. (1/4 Mile N. of Merrick Road) A:$1, Paul 516-289-7398

JAN 16 NY, RIDGEWOOD, Home Run Baseball & Comics Show, St. Mary of the Snow, 410 Graham Ave., Green point, A:$1(kids Free), 10am-4pm, Richie, 718-386-4426

JAN 16-17 NY, KINGSTON, BAseball card & Comic Show- Hudson Valley Mall, Ulster Ave. T:35, F:$90, A:Free, Mall Hours. Bill Fusaro- 914-331-8466

JAN 17 NY, BROOKLYN, Sports Memorabilia & Comic Book Show, Floyd Benett American Legion, 5601 Ave. N, T: 25 F:$40 A:Free, 9:30am-4pm, Tom Raffaele, 718-241-0480

JAN 17,31 NY, BROOKLYN, Brooklyn's Big Sunday Show- 2164 Ralph Ave. & Ave L, T:45, F:$35, A:Free, 10am-5pm, Scotty O'Donnell 718-251-2075

JAN 28, NY, OCEANSIDE, Comic & Sports card show, Sons Of Italy-3015 Long Beach Rd., A:Free, 6pm-10pm, Paul 516-289-7398

JAN 31 NY, BROOKLYN, Brooklyn's Big Sunday Show- 2164 Ralph Ave. & Ave L, T:45, F:$35, A:Free, 10am-5pm, Scotty O'Donnell 718-251-2075

FEB 6, NY, FLORAL PARK, Comic, Baseball Card Show, St. Hedwig's Parish Hall, 309 Jericho Turnpike, T:45, F:$45, A:$1, 9:30-4:00, Ken Blitz-516-248-4235

FEB 7 NY, SARASOTA SPRINGS, Comic Show, St Clement's School GYM, 231 Lake Ave, T:30, F:$35, A:$1, 1pm-5pm, Rocco Rosato, 518-584-1429

FEB 14, NY, WILLISTON PARK, Baseball Card Show, American Legion Hall, 730 Willis Ave. (LOWER LEVEL) A:Free, 10am-4pm, Info-Paul 516-289-7398

NORTH CAROLINA

JAN 30, NC, RALEIGH, Reality Comic Con., Holiday Inn North, 2815 Capital Blvd., 10am-4pm, 301-791-8159

JAN 31, NC, CHARLOTTE, Reality Comic Con. Ramada Inn Central, I-77 exit 7 at 515 Clanton Rd. 10am-4pm, 301-791-8159

OHIO

JAN 2, OH, DAYTON, Reality Comic Book Convention, Holiday Inn I-75 exit 50A at 2455 Dryden Rd, 10am-4pm, 301-791-8159

JAN 9-10, OH, CLEVELAND, Sports Card & Comic Show, Tri-city senior center, 16699 E. Bagley Rd. T:40, F:$60, A:$1.50, 10-5pm, Donald 216-243-5748

JAN 10 OH, AKRON, Comic and Non-Sports Card Show, Holiday Inn, Akron-South I-77 & Arlington Rd., T:35 F:$45 A:Free, 10am-4pm Mark Leighley, 216-494-9958

JAN 23, OH, MILFORD, Live Oaks DECA Sportscard & Comic Show, Live Oaks Vocational School, 5659 Buckwheat Rd. T:45, F:$15, 11am-4pm, Jerry 513-575-1900

JAN 24 OH, MENTOR, Infield Promotions Comic Book & Non-Sport Card Shows, Travelodge Hotel (Rts 2 & 306 South), 7701 Reynolds Rd., T: 35 F:$40 A:$1.50 Irene Pike, 216-255-5179

JAN 24, OH, COLUMBUS, Reality Comic Con.;Sheraton Inn, 2124 South Hamilton Rd. 10am-4pm, Info:301-791-8159

JAN 27, OH, CLEVELAND, Sports Card & Comic Show, Tri-city senior center, 16699 E. Bagley Rd. T:30, F:$30, A:Free, 6-9:30pm, Donald 216-243-5748

JAN 30, OH, AKRON, Holiday Inn-4073 Medina Rd. A:$4, 10am-4pm, Jubilee Ent. 301-292-4587

JAN 30, OH, COLUMBUS, Holiday Inn(East),I-70 & Hamilton Rd. Exit 107, A:$4, 10am-4pm, Jubilee Ent. 301-292-4587

FEB 6-7 OH, AKRON, Akron-Canton Comic Con, Tadmor Hall, I-77 at exit 120, T:70 F:$100 A:$5 daily, $8 both days(under6free), Sat 11am-6pm, Sun 10am-4pm, Jeff Harper, 216-499-6056

FEB 6-7 OH, AKRON, Akron-Canton Comic Con, Tadmor Hall, 3000 Krebs Dr. I-77, Exit 120, T:70, F:$100, A:$5(a day, $8 for both) 11am-6pmSat, 10am-4pmSun, Jeff Harper 216-499-6056

FEB 7, OH, CANTON, Parke Hotel-4343 Everhard Rd. A:$4, 10am-4pm, Jubilee Ent. 301-292-4587

FEB 13, OH, CINCINNATI, Holiday Inn, I-275 Exit 46, Rt. 342, A:$4, 10am-4pm, Jubilee Ent. 301-292-4587

PENNSYLVANIA

JAN 16 PA, LANGHORNE, Baseball Cards & Comics, Sheraton Books County II, 400 Oxford Valley Rd., T:50 F:$40,2@$70 A:$1, Greg Petrino, 215-968-8577 or Eric Poppel 215-355-3926

JAN 23, PA, PITTSBURGH, Reality Comic Con. Greentree Marriot, 101 Marriot Dr. 10am-4pm, Info:301-791-8159

JAN 30, PA, HARRISBURG, Reality Comic Con., Best Western, I-83 exit 18A, 10am-4pm, 301-791-8159

FEB 6, PA, MONROEVILLE, Howard Johnson's-2750 Mosside Blvd. Rt. #22, A:$4, 10am-4pm, Jubilee Ent. 301-292-4587

TENNESSEE

FEB 6-7 TN, NASHVILLE, Ramada Inn-Opry Land 2401 Music Valley Drive T:25, F:$75, A:$5 10am-4pmSat, 10am-5pmSun, Dana Pinkard 706-234-8210

TEXAS

JAN 16, TX, DALLAS. Rookie's Sports Card & Comic Show, MArriot Hotel-7750 LBJ Freeway, at coit rd. T:40, F:$50/1 or $90/2, A:$1, 9am-4pm, W. Henderson 214-840-3670

JAN 23, TX, HOUSTON, Comic Carnival, Days Inn, 2020 E. NASA Rd.1 T:35, F:$60, A:$3, 10am-5pm, DJ 713-772-4934

JAN 24, TX, CLEAR LAKE, Comic Carnival, Days Inn- 2020 NASA road 1, T:35, F:$60, A:$3.00, 10-5pm, DJ-713-772-4934

JAN 24 TX, AUSTIN, Sports Card and Comic Show, Howard Johnson South, I-35 and Woodward, T: 35 F:$39 9:30am-5pm, Ralph or A. Willis, 210-431-0737

JAN 31 TX, SAN ANTONIO, Sports Card and Comic Show, Wyndham Hotel, I-10 and Wurzbach Rd., T:35 F:$50 A:$1 (under10free), Ralph or A. Willis, 210-431-0737

VIRGINIA

JAN 3 VA, RICHMOND, Reality Comic Book Convention, Holiday Inn Crosslands, I-64 exit 185B at 2000 Staples Mill Rd, 10am-4pm, 301-791-8159

JAN 10, VA, VIRGINIA BEACH, Pavillion Convention Center-1000-19th St. A:$4, 10am-4pm, Jubilee ent. 301-292-4587

JAN 17, VA, TYSON'S CORNER, Comic Book Show, 8401 Westpark Drive, T:35, F:$50, A:$2, 10am-4pm, Capital Ass. 703-691-9094

JAN 23, VA, ARLINGTON, Howard Johnson's-2650 Jefferson Davis Hwy, Rt. #1, 10am-4pm, Jubilee Ent. 301-292-4587

JAN 31 VA, SPRINGFIELD, Comic Book Show, 6550 Loisdale Road, T:35, F:$50, A:$2, Capital Associates 703-691-9094

WASHINGTON DC

JAN 16, DC, WASHINGTON, Reality Comic Book Con.-Howard Johnson's Hotel, 2650 Jefferson Davis highway, 10am-4pm, Info:301-791-8159

FEB 13, DC, WASHINGTON, Reality Comic Con, Days Inn, 2000 Jefferson Davis Hwy, 10am-4pm, Info: 301-791-8159

ATTENTION SHOW PROMOTERS

Having a Comic Book show? Convention listings in the Wizard Show Calendar are free.

Send us:

Name of the show, Date and Hours, City,State & Address, # of tables & Prices, Admission charge, Contact Name and Telephone Number.

Send To:

Wizard Show Calendar
100 Red Schoolhouse Rd.
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For certainty of placement, send information 6 weeks prior to month of show. If possible, do not leave out any information. Shows missing Date,City or State information will not be listed. Please print clearly. *Do not send flyers.* Ad rates available upon request.

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